

V. SAZONOV

ON THE
"MANIFESTO
OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY"
OF

MARX
AND
ENGELS



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS

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MOSCOW

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О «Манифесте Коммунистической партии»
К. Маркса и Ф. Энгельса

На английском языке

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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Chapter I. FROM UTOPIA TO SCIENCE ..	7
Chapter II. THE BIRTH OF THE PROLE- TARIAN PARTY	28
Chapter III. 'THIS LITTLE BOOKLET IS WORTH WHOLE VOLUMES'	59
Chapter IV. A PROGRAMME ACKNOWL- EDGED BY MILLIONS	92

Marx and Engels lived to see numerous editions of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* published in various countries and in various languages. As the struggle for emancipation waged by the working class intensified, so the *Manifesto* reached an ever broader public. Thus in his preface to the English edition of 1888, Engels noted that '...the history of the *Manifesto* reflects, to a great extent, the history of the modern working-class movement', and he went on to add: 'At present it is undoubtedly the most widespread, the most international production of all Socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of working men from Siberia to California.'¹

Today there is still intense interest in this outstanding piece of Marxist literature. It is now published in almost every language of the world, and is read and studied by people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and elsewhere. Nor is this interest purely historical. On acquainting themselves with the ideas contained in this work, progressive people seeking economic and social liberation find the answers to the most urgent and

¹ K.Marx, F.Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Preface to the English Edition of 1888), Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 19.

controversial questions arising in the course of their struggle, discover the methodology to use in examining the highly complex phenomena of economic and political life, and receive tremendous encouragement for their historical optimism.

As any historical document, the *Manifesto* bears the mark of its age, and is therefore best understood in the context of that period which gave birth to it. In this short work devoted to the *Manifesto*, the reader will find a brief history of the socio-revolutionary movement that brought the *Manifesto* into being as the programme of the first international communist organisation. The author examines the origins of all the basic ideas expressed in the *Manifesto*, analyses its content, emphasises what is new in this work by Marx and Engels in comparison with previous socialist thought, and shows how the *Manifesto* has stood the test of time.

FROM UTOPIA TO SCIENCE

‘...The services rendered by Marx and Engels to the working class may be expressed in a few words thus: they taught the working class to know itself, and to be conscious of itself, and they substituted science for dreams.’¹

For centuries mankind dreamed of a society in which there would be no economic and social inequality, no exploitation and oppression of man by man. The centuries passed, states and peoples disappeared from the face of the earth, new pages were written in the annals of history, yet there still persisted the legend of a ‘Golden Age’ of genuine equality and justice.

The dream of a new ‘Golden Age’ first emerged with the establishment within society of private-property economic relations determining the relations between men and with the establishment of the rule of wealth, dividing men into those who create wealth and those who enjoy it.

Vladimir Lenin, the genial successor of Marx and Engels, showed that such aspirations on the part of the oppressed masses naturally assumed

¹ V.I. Lenin, ‘Frederick Engels’ in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 20.

a socialist, that is, an anti-exploiter, anti-private-property colouring. 'For many centuries and even for thousands of years,' he wrote, 'mankind has dreamt of doing away "at once" with all and every kind of exploitation'.¹ He defined the desire to 'abolish the distinction between rich and poor' as 'a socialist aim'.²

If we look at history from this point of view, we can say that the numerous slave revolts of the Ancient World, the peasant rebellions of the Middle Ages, dominated by feudal relations, and all the various socio-religious teachings and traditional folklores, were expressions of the dream of social equality. However, these dreams were very vague and ill-defined. Mankind had to traverse more than one stage of development before it was realised that social and economic equality can be achieved only by abolishing classes and class distinctions, and that the abolition of classes means, first and foremost, the abolition of their economic basis, that is, private-property relations. However, the conditions necessary to do this emerge only with the development of the capitalist socio-economic formation.

Capitalist production began to develop in Europe as early as the 15th-16th centuries. It was accompanied by the invention and constant improvement of various machines and machine-tools, which supplanted the manual labour of the craftsmen and increased the production of various commodities, and also by the discovery and colonisation of new lands and the shameless

exploitation of their native population and natural resources. As a result of capitalist development, large numbers of peasants and artisans were ruined, and in the most developed European countries there emerged, on the one hand, the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, and, on the other, the proletariat. To begin with, the latter was a disorganised, heterogeneous mass unaware of its power and lacking any aims of its own, and consequently its struggle against increasing exploitation and impoverishment took the form of spontaneous revolts, the destruction of machinery and factory premises, etc. The workers still did not understand that it was not the machines that were the cause of their sufferings. It was therefore quite natural that the socialist and communist theories which arose at this time were utopian in nature. 'To the crude conditions of capitalistic production and the crude class conditions corresponded crude theories,' wrote Engels. 'The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in undeveloped economic conditions, the Utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain.'³

The authors of these 'crude theories' representing various types of Utopia had first voiced their sharp criticism of the flaws and vices of capitalism as far back as the 16th century. They wrote with indignation of the dreadful poverty and harsh exploitation of working people, especially of women and children, of the ever-deepening chasm between poverty and wealth. Many of them correctly identified private ownership of the means of production as the basis of economic

¹ V.I. Lenin, 'Petty-Bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism', *Collected Works*, Vol. 9, 1977, p. 443.

² V.I. Lenin, 'The Land Question and the Fight for Freedom', *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, 1978, pp. 437-38.

³ F. Engels, 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 119.

and social inequality. '...Wherever you have private property and all men measure all things by cash values, there it is scarcely possible for a commonwealth to have justice or prosperity,' wrote Thomas More in his *Utopia* in 1516.¹ Thus in depicting the state structure of the future, such thinkers as More of England, Campanella of Italy, Meslier, Mably and Babeuf of France and his followers (16th-18th centuries), and, later, the great utopian socialists Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier, assumed that society would be organised on the basis of *public ownership*. Subsequently their ideas were taken up and developed by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Contrasting the new society to bourgeois society, the French utopian socialists of the 18th century considered work to be the most important source of material and spiritual values. 'Let there be no religion among you other than that ... of honest work and the harmonious life of all together...',² exclaimed Meslier. In their turn the utopian socialists of the 19th century, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, the immediate forerunners of Marx and Engels, emphasised that the most useful work should be the most respected. Saint-Simon declared that the status of the individual in society should depend solely on his personal labour and personal abilities. It was Saint-Simon who first put forward the basic principle of socialism: 'From each according to his ability, to each ability according to its work.'³

¹ Thomas More, *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, ed. by Edward Sturtz, New Navin and London, 1974, p. 103.

² Jean Meslier, 'Le Testament', Tome III, Librairie étrangère, Amsterdam, 1864, p. 386.

³ *Doctrine de Saint-Simon*, Exposition Première année, 1829, Nouvelle Edition, Paris, 1924, p. 96.

However, despite the brilliance of some of their conclusions and predictions, the views of the forerunners of scientific communism were, on the whole, utopian in nature. They expressed merely the need to abolish class antagonism, but the ways and means of doing so were still not clear. Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen did not appreciate the historical role of the proletariat, although each showed a keen interest in the fate of the workers. 'One thing is common to all three,' wrote Engels. 'Not one of them appears as a representative of the interests of that proletariat which historical development had, in the meantime, produced. Like the French philosophers, they do not claim to emancipate a particular class ... but all humanity at once.'⁴ Thus the great Utopian Socialists appealed to the whole of society, and above all to its rulers, hoping that they would voluntarily agree to the reconstruction of society on socialist principles.

The historically conditioned limitedness of the utopian ideas of the 16th-19th centuries also revealed itself in the call for strict equality of distribution and consumption, in the preaching of asceticism, etc. Scientific communism, Marxism, overcame the weaknesses in the preceding theories. Nonetheless, uninformed people still imagine communism to be a society in which everything is socialised, up to and including wives, and in which there is universal levelling. However, such crude, distorted ideas of egalitarian communism vulgarised by the petty bourgeoisie have nothing whatsoever in common with the ideology of the proletariat.

The inadequacy of utopian theories was, in-

⁴ F. Engels, 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 117.

deed, largely due to the fact that they lacked any organic links with the working class and the working-class struggle, even though this class had, by the middle of the last century, become an independent and formidable force as a result of the rapid growth of industrial production in the countries of Europe. The rise of industry had visibly changed the social structure of the population in the most developed countries. By the 1820s, the agricultural small-holder in England had almost completely disappeared, and society was divided into three main classes: the proletariat, capitalists and landowners. In France and Germany this process was far more complex and proceeded far more slowly, but here too it led to the mass impoverishment of the artisans, craftsmen and peasants, and the emergence of the class of proletarians. By 1841 there were almost 4 million industrial workers in England, and over the next ten years this figure increased by yet another million. Moreover, their conditions of work were often worse than those in prison, while their pay was a mere pittance. A comparison of a worker's wage with food prices shows that a family with an income of 1 shilling and 8 pence per person per week was unable to buy meat, butter, cheese, coffee or tea, and was unable to pay for medical services. The diet of the working people consisted mainly of porridge and potatoes.

Not surprisingly, the workers grew increasingly indignant over the inhuman conditions in which they lived and worked, and their demonstrations gradually became class-conscious, organised actions. In August 1842, millions of English workers came out on strike, demanding that Parliament pass the National Charter, that is, a law introducing universal (male) suffrage. The

petition handed in to Parliament in May, 1842 had more than 3 million 300 thousand signatures, making it the largest working-class demonstration ever witnessed up to that point. The uprisings by weavers in Lyons, France, in 1831 and 1834, and by Silesian weavers in Germany in 1844, also marked a significant step forward in the appreciation by the working class of its class and political interests. These demonstrations by the proletariat, wrote Engels, marked 'a decisive change in the conception of history'.¹

The inexorable growth of the working-class movement in Europe, and the now open and bitter clashes between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie made a scientific explanation of events a social necessity. Bourgeois ideologists were already formulating the myths of the common interests of labour and capital, of universal harmony in capitalist society, and of the stability and permanence of capitalism which continue to circulate to this day. However, despite these myths, despite moving appeals by bourgeois ideologists for unity between employer and worker as the basis for universal prosperity, worker demonstrations became more and more frequent. It was not enough to explain the cause of the escalating struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; the whole of human history up to that point had to be re-examined in order to provide a clear answer to the questions that now troubled every section of the population. What is the future of mankind? What are the social forces that play a decisive role in the struggle for a brighter future? What

¹ F. Engels, 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 131.

is the role to be played in this struggle by the proletariat, whose demonstrations have shaken the whole of the capitalist world?

By 1848, when they wrote the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, both Marx and Engels had already passed through a complex process of development. Each had come in his own way to the realisation that it was the proletariat which was destined to translate into reality the age-old dream of all the oppressed, namely, to put an end once and for all to inequality, injustice and the exploitation of man by man. The question of the destiny of mankind, and the meaning of human life, had troubled Marx from his youth. At school and at university he was an avid and thoughtful reader, his favourite writers being the German and French Enlighteners, who were concerned above all with free human development and the pursuit of noble aims. However, he was not overwhelmed by their authority. All through his life Marx revealed his capacity for independent thought. As part of his school-leaving examinations, the 17-year-old Marx wrote an essay on choosing a profession that would be of greatest benefit to society. In it he remarked that the individual cannot always pursue the profession of his choice, since '...our relations in society have to some extent already begun to be established before we are in a position to determine them'.¹ This idea already, in effect, contains the germ of Marx's first great discovery—the materialist concept of history.

Marx devoted a great deal of his time, particularly at university, to a study of the history of

philosophy. Pre-Marxian philosophy had reached its zenith in the idealist philosophy of Hegel, a brilliant thinker who had shown that the whole history of nature and society is permeated with the *idea of development*—a process which is eternal and dialectic. According to Hegel, there is nothing that is fixed once and for all. In both nature and society everything is in a constant state of flux, arising, maturing, dying and making way for the new. Hegel himself, it is true, was not consistent in his application of this idea to human society, declaring the Prussian monarchy under which he lived, one of the most reactionary governments of the day, to be a model state. However, the Young Hegelians, Marx included, did not agree with him on this point. If there is nothing unchanging, nothing fixed, they argued, then any social structure must also undergo change, particularly a structure such as the Prussian monarchy, which violently opposed the introduction of any democratic reforms.

The young Engels came to a similar conclusion. Unlike Marx, Engels was unable to receive a university education. His father, who owned a cotton mill, wanted his son to follow him in the business, and Engels had to spend much of his time at the office dealing with business correspondence, going over the accounts, etc. However, his desire for knowledge, wide reading and an interest in politics helped him, by self-education, to join the ranks of the outstanding thinkers and essayists of his day, and finally to overtake them.

At the beginning of the 1840s both Marx and Engels joined the revolutionary-democratic movement in Germany. Both of them were pursuing the same goal—to discover the laws governing historical development, to determine the future

¹ K. Marx, 'Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 4.

course of that development and, finally, to identify that social force destined to realise the age-old aspiration of mankind for freedom, social justice and universal well-being.

Marx, who in 1842 joined the staff of the *Rheinische Zeitung* and later became its editor, began to write articles vigorously defending '...the poor, politically and socially propertyless many...' However, the constant censorship difficulties and objections by government officials made it evident to him that the newspaper could not provide sufficient opportunities for publishing such material, and Marx decided to leave the newspaper, and Prussia. 'It is a bad thing to have to perform menial duties even for the sake of freedom; to fight with pinpricks, instead of with clubs.'¹ He compared the Prussian state to a ship of fools sailing to inevitable destruction in the approaching revolution. For Marx, the main question now was to elucidate the nature of this revolution, its causes and its driving forces. He began to think about ways and means of bringing about the revolutionary transformation of the world, and to seek that force which would be capable of changing the existing order. He found this force in the proletariat.

The study of philosophy, world history, in particular the history of the French bourgeois revolution at the end of the 18th century, and the writings of such Enlighteners as Diderot, Rousseau, etc., as well as of the contemporary social conflicts, led Marx to the realisation

that history is driven forward by the class struggle, and that in this struggle each class defends its own interests. Thus the bourgeoisie, having come to power, ceases to play a progressive, revolutionary role, for its interests lie in the preservation of private property. The interests of the proletariat, on the other hand, lie in the abolition of private property, for the proletariat has no property of its own, and by its labour merely increases the property, and therefore also the power, of the bourgeoisie. The interests of the proletariat coincide—for the first time in history—with the interests of all the working and exploited masses: the rule of private property also condemns them to lack of rights, to need and humiliation. Thus the struggle of the working class to achieve its own emancipation should become the struggle to liberate the whole of society, all the working people. This struggle reaches its culmination in a socialist revolution, which overthrows the system based on private property and lays the foundations for the construction of a new society, a society of full and genuine equality.

Such were the conclusions reached by Marx after withdrawing, in 1843, into what he termed 'the classroom'.

Engels, in the meantime, was in England, where he had been sent by his father in November 1842. While working at the Ehrmann & Engels cotton mill in Manchester, he had every opportunity to observe directly the life and struggle of the workers, to study the political structure of the leading industrial nation, to perceive the essence of the industrial revolution and the social changes it had brought in its train. '...Who then actually rules in England?' asks

¹ K. Marx, 'Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 230.

² K. Marx to Arnold Ruge, January 25, 1843 in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 397.

Engels in his article. And he answers: 'Property rules... The middle class and property are dominant; the poor man has no rights, is oppressed and fleeced, the Constitution repudiates him and the law mistreats him...'.¹

Engels also saw that the working class in England did not want to reconcile itself to such a position and was waging an increasingly resolute struggle in defence of its rights. While in Manchester he witnessed the armed struggle of the workers against the manufacturers and was filled with admiration. Basing himself upon the experience of the Chartist movement, the first mass, revolutionary, proletarian movement in England, and of the uprisings by the weavers of Lyons and Silesia, Engels concluded that the power of the proletariat would be invincible if growth in numbers were complemented by organisation and knowledge. Thus Engels, like Marx, saw in the proletariat the most revolutionary force of his day, a force capable of remaking society.

In the 1840s, the working-class movement was still largely spontaneous, and people with extremely vague and confused ideas rallied under the flag of socialism and communism. It was therefore vitally important to speed up the elaboration of a revolutionary communist theory and world outlook and disseminate it via the press. 'Failing a few publications in which the principles are logically and historically developed out of past ways of thinking and past history, and as their necessary continuation,' Engels wrote to Marx in October 1844, 'the whole thing will remain rather hazy and most people will be

groping in the dark.'²

Marx and Engels had, in fact, already begun this work during their meeting in Paris in August, 1844. The ten days they spent together were devoted in the main to their first joint work—*The Holy Family*. Marx finished it after Engels had left for Germany, and it was published in February, 1845. In it the authors put forward a number of basic propositions that constituted a new concept of history, which was clearly presented as 'nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims'³ while the basis of human history they identified as material production. In this book Marx and Engels showed that the economic structure and the state were intimately linked together, and that the economic system determined the nature of the state. The state, in its turn, affects the economic structure. Thus the bourgeois state destroyed and swept away feudal rights and privileges that were hindering the development of capitalism, and thereby made way for capitalist development.

The Holy Family also contains an interesting dialectical analysis of the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in capitalist society. The proletariat and the bourgeoisie constitute a single whole in the sense that both are the product of the capitalist system. In this contradictory unity the bourgeoisie represents the conservative element insofar as it is interested in the preservation of the existing order. It needs private property and the proletariat, whose labour increases the property of the capitalists.

¹ F. Engels, 'The Condition of England. The English Constitution' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1975, pp. 497, 513.

¹ Engels to Marx, beginning of October, 1844 in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, 1982, p. 3.

² K. Marx, F. Engels, 'The Holy Family' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, 1975, p. 93.

The proletariat, on the other hand, seeks to abolish private property and, together with private property, the conditions under which its labour serves to enrich the capitalists. Hence the proletariat represents the revolutionary element in the antagonistic unity of the two main classes of bourgeois society. This antagonism, this contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the proletarian revolution, which is destined to abolish private property and the classes it has engendered. 'The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounces on itself by producing the proletariat, just as it executes the sentence that wage-labour pronounces on itself by producing wealth for others and poverty for itself.'

Not every member of the working class is, of course, able to understand this, not every worker is ready for the struggle to defend his interests and the interests of the working class as a whole. Many do not like the idea of such a struggle and seek a 'friendly' way of resolving class conflicts by means of compromise. It is therefore no accident that, in *The Holy Family*, the authors emphasise that the proletariat will destroy capitalist society not because this is the aim of certain individual workers or their leaders, but because the very condition of the oppressed class, which creates the enormous wealth appropriated by the bourgeoisie while itself possessing nothing, compels it to take up arms in defence of its own rights. Without such a struggle, the workers will never be able to achieve any radical changes in their situation. The concessions made from time to time by the bour-

geoisie under pressure from the workers are often annulled in times of crisis or when there is a lull in the working-class movement. Thus Marx wrote: 'It is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do.'

Equally important for the development of proletarian class-consciousness was the book by Engels entitled *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*. He began work on this book immediately after returning home from Paris, where Marx was finishing *The Holy Family*, and at the same time undertook active communist propaganda in Germany. At that time the ideas of communism (mainly the utopian variety) were evoking a broad response in the German public, a response which was a manifestation of dissatisfaction with the existing order and a search for ways of solving acute social and political problems. Engels took this opportunity to organise a number of meetings in Elberfeld, where he himself delivered impassioned speeches.

The young Engels (he was then 25 years old) vividly described to his audience the main vices and contradictions of the bourgeois order, flaws and contradictions that were eroding it and would inevitably destroy it. The unregulated conduct of economic affairs, lack of organisation, exploitation of the working people, mutual hostility, and disregard of the general good in the name of personal advantage were features characteristic of capitalism. The result was an ever widening gulf between a handful of wealthy and the mass of the

¹ K.Marx, F.Engels, 'The Holy Family' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 36.

¹ Ibid., p. 37.

working people, an increasing lack of correspondence between production and consumption, and frequent trade crises leading to a cut-back in industrial production and the squandering of material and human resources.

‘Communist society, Engels argued, would be very different, for there ‘the interests of individuals are not opposed to one another but, on the contrary, are united, competition is eliminated’.¹ There will be no room for the private appropriation of essential goods, production will be regulated ‘according to needs’² and consequently over-production crises will cease. Under communism, society will not be hostile to the individual, and the interests of society will become the interests of each individual. It will become possible to make rational and planned use of human resources, so pitilessly squandered under capitalism. Another advantage of the new order will be the economical use of human labour power thanks to the *fusing of the individual powers* into social collective power.³ All of this, Engels emphasised, is no fantasy, no utopia, not a theory divorced from reality, but the inevitable result of historical and economic development.

The young communist enthusiastically put before his audience the ideas and conclusions he and Marx had formulated as a result of their research work, their study of contemporary reality and the practical experience of the working-class movement. *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* was published in 1845. In

¹ F. Engels, ‘Speeches in Elberfeld’ in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 246.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p. 252.

it the author adopted an openly communist position, and the entire content of the book led the reader to perceive the inevitability of a revolution destined to overthrow the existing social order. Engels was the first to note such characteristic features of capitalist production as regular economic crises, the creation of a reserve army of industrial workers in the form of the unemployed, and the increasing exploitation of the working class. He convincingly demonstrated that, with the further development of the factory system and the expansion of capitalism, the productive forces find relations based on the private form of appropriation increasingly restrictive. The product, manufactured collectively by a huge number of people, becomes the property of one or a few capitalists. Such a contradiction cannot continue indefinitely. The conflict between the social nature of production and of labour and the private-capitalist form of appropriation must be resolved by means of a communist revolution, and this revolution is to be carried through by the proletariat—a class that arose as a consequence of the industrial revolution.

Another positive aspect of this book was that it showed the working class not merely as a suffering class. The author cited many examples of the harsh life of miners and steel-workers, spinners, weavers and farm workers, vividly depicting life in the major industrial centres of England, but the most striking pages are those in which he describes the struggle waged by the English workers, their attempts to organise and coordinate their actions. Engels underlines that these major industrial centres have a particularly important role to play in the development of the working-class movement, for here the work-

ing class is concentrated together, unites, begins its organised struggle and creates workers' associations.

In the course of the class struggle, the proletariat gradually perceives the need for higher forms of organisation and solidarity, the need to create its own independent political party. Engels emphasises that one of the decisive factor in the creation and consolidation of such a party is the fusion of the mass revolutionary movement of the working class and socialist theory, a theory that explains to the proletariat the meaning, purpose and prospects of their struggle and gives them confidence in its victorious outcome.

This work by Engels had a profound impact on the public, and many advanced workers joined in the revolutionary struggle. Twenty years after its first publication Marx wrote: 'How freshly and passionately, with what bold anticipations, and no learned and scientific doubts, matters are treated here!'¹

Having completed *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, Engels decided to leave Germany, where the Prussian police were becoming overtly interested in him, and in April, 1845 he moved to Belgium. In May he settled in Brussels, at 7, Rue Alliance, not far from Marx, who had been compelled to leave Paris as a result of pressure from the Prussian government. Later Engels frequently mentioned that it was then, in the spring of 1845 in Brussels, that Marx outlined to him the fundamental principles of the materialist concept of history. In *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* Engels revealed that

¹ Marx to Engels, April 9, 1863, in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 131.

he had been thinking along similar lines. In the autumn of 1845, the two friends began work on a new, proletarian philosophy, the main principles of which they decided to set forth in the form of a critique of German post-Hegelian philosophy. This idea gave birth to *The German Ideology*, which was completed in April, 1846.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels first indicated the premises that served as the starting point for the formulation of their new philosophy—men, human activity and the material conditions of that activity. Human activity, they wrote, has two aspects: production, i.e., the relationship to nature, and social intercourse, i.e., the relationship of men to each other. The former plays the decisive role, for on this depends the way of life and the social and political relations between men. The level of human freedom depends upon production, its level of development and the material conditions of human life. '...In general people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity.'

Marx and Engels then went on to examine from this point of view the conditions necessary for the communist transformation of society. The first condition they identified as a high level of development of production, which is essentially incompatible with private property, yet at the same time is a prerequisite of organising society on communist principles. The second condition they identified as the mass proletarianisation of the population, which would lead to the emergence of a revolutionary class. In bourgeois society,

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'The German Ideology' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, 1976, p. 38.

wrote the authors of *The German Ideology*, '...a class is called forth which has to bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages ... and from which emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness'.¹

In order to build a new, communist society, this class must win political power, establish its domination 'even when its domination, as is the case with the proletariat, leads to the abolition of the old form of society in its entirety and of domination in general'.² However, emphasised Marx and Engels, a communist revolution is essential not only in order to overthrow the 'old social order based on exploitation and the appropriation of the products of the labour of others'. It is also essential in order to change people themselves, and to create the conditions necessary for the all-round development of the individual, 'the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew'.³

The materialist concept of history set forth in *The German Ideology* was of enormous significance for the working-class movement in that it convincingly and consistently showed that the growth of the productive forces leads to the transition from one social structure to another, higher one, and that the emergence of large-scale industry and the proletariat creates the conditions necessary for the communist transformation of society. 'Communism among the French and

Germans, Chartism among the English,' wrote Engels later, 'now no longer appeared as something accidental which could just as well not have occurred. These movements now presented themselves as a movement of the modern oppressed class, the proletariat, as the more or less developed forms of its historically necessary struggle against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, as forms of the class struggle, but distinguished from all earlier class struggles by this one thing, that the present-day oppressed class, the proletariat, cannot achieve its emancipation without at the same time emancipating society as a whole from division into classes, and therefore, from class struggles. And communism now no longer meant the concoction, by means of the imagination, of an ideal society as perfect as possible, but insight into the nature, the conditions and the consequent general aims of the struggle waged by the proletariat'.⁴

Marx and Engels were never able to publish *The German Ideology*, but in writing this work they had, in their own words, achieved their main aim—'self-clarification'.⁵ A powerful theoretical weapon had been created for the working class. Now what remained was to put this weapon into the hands of the workers and achieve the fusion of scientific socialism and the practical struggle of the proletariat. This was the task to which Marx and Engels now directed their attention.

¹ K.Marx, F.Engels, 'The German Ideology' in Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴ F.Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League' in: K.Marx, F.Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol.3, p. 179.

⁵ K.Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 22.

THE BIRTH OF THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

'I consider it absolutely impossible to publish the *Manifesto* in any language whatsoever without indicating how it came to be written.'

Engels

November, 1831. Over the city of Lyons, one of the largest industrial centres in France, a black flag is unfurled on which are written words expressive of bottomless despair: 'Live by working, or die fighting!' Reduced to extreme poverty, workers at the Lyons silk-weaving mills had taken up arms. They were supported by the whole of working Lyons, and three days later the local garrison was obliged to surrender the city to the insurgents. It was only ten days later, on 3 December, that the troops sent in from Paris defeated the rebel detachments and cruelly suppressed the revolt. The first attempt by the workers to achieve by force of arms an improvement in their situation ended in defeat. However, this first class battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie echoed across Europe, instilling fear into property owners.

'The power revealed by these contemporary slaves...', the French socialist Louis Blanc was to write later, 'made it easy to anticipate the 19th-century upheavals maturing within it.'¹ The bourgeois-aristocratic circles of France, England and Germany were disturbed by a

foreboding of these upheavals. In the press the workers were now referred to as 'enemies', as 'barbarians' from whom the whole of society, the whole of modern civilisation, must be saved. However, in the large volume of literature published on the 'worker question', there occasionally appeared quite penetrating conclusions as to the historical role and potential of the giant class just beginning to straighten its back and stand upright. Moreover, these predictions were made not only by socialists such as Louis Blanc, but also by ideologists of the ruling classes. One of these ideologists, Monfalcon, who witnessed the Lyons uprisings in 1831 and 1834, predicted that one of the immediate 'fatal consequences of the events of November will be the transformation of the workers into a political class'. 'There will appear those,' he wrote, 'who will say to the workers: "Your sweated labour benefits only the wealthy; the factory owners are your natural enemies. You complain, you are miserable, yet you are more numerous and more powerful. Unite!"'¹

Indeed, these uprisings revealed to the workers that their strength lay in unity. Various associations, mutual aid societies, worker organisations and alliances were established. Some operated openly, legally, others secretly, compelled to hide from police harassment. This move towards mutual assistance and unity led to the creation of the German Popular Alliance in Paris in 1832, composed mainly of political emigres and craftsmen forced to leave Germany. The aims of the Alliance were the unification of Germany, then still divided into numerous small

¹ Louis Blanc, *Histoire de Dix Ans, 1830-1840*, Vol. III, Brussels, 1846, p. 60.

¹ J.-B. Monfalcon, *Histoire des insurrections de Lyon, en 1831 et en 1834*, Lyons-Paris, 1834, p. 99.

principalities, the establishment of a republic, and legislation guaranteeing 'human and civil rights'.¹

In July, 1833, the Alliance began to print and distribute leaflets addressed to peasants, craftsmen and industrial workers. In one of these leaflets, addressed directly to industrial workers, the authors wrote that craftsmen, factory workers and peasants are the most wretched and destitute, although they do the hardest work; on the other hand, the factory-owners, landowners, bankers, capitalists, aristocrats and ministers—in short all those who are surrounded by luxury—live in complete idleness. Why is it that millions of people labour so that the idle rich should live in luxury? 'This happens,' declared the leaflet 'because the idle have discovered the secret of forcing you, unknown even to yourselves, to work for them and, even more importantly, have obliged you to believe that they are being kind and compassionate in allowing you to labour for their enjoyment. As to the nature of that secret—think about it for yourselves. But if you cannot find the answer, then wait for our next leaflet...'.²

The promised leaflet soon appeared, and it ended with a call for the destruction of wealth, that is, of large-scale private property.

On 10 April, 1834, the French government adopted a law on coalitions which was directed against organisations disseminating republican ideas. A group from the German Popular Alliance therefore decided to set up a secret organisation called the League of Outlaws. Its conspiratorial

principles and secrecy of operation were combined with a certain level of democracy, for the League was composed of German craftsmen and factory workers who knew each other well and were used to trusting and helping each other. At their meetings they listened to lectures and discussed political questions, the most important of which was the question of the future constitutional structure of Germany. However, the League did not survive for very long; in 1836 a split occurred within it that finally led to the creation of a new organisation—the League of the Just.

The birth of the League reflected a process of considerable importance for the young working-class movement. Previous alliances had united virtually all those who were dissatisfied with the existing order, and therefore they were strongly influenced by petty-bourgeois elements. Now, however, the proletariat began to separate off from the general mass of 'the people'. The League of the Just comprised the most revolutionary representatives of the German emigres in Paris, people who, for the most part, were what might be called craftsmen-workers—blacksmiths, joiners, tailors, shoemakers, etc. The League proclaimed its aim to be 'the liberation of Germany from the yoke of shameful oppression, the emancipation of man and the implementation of the rights of man and the citizen'.³ The League also inscribed on its banner the demand for communal property, believing such communal ownership to be an essential consequence of universal equality.

The League was based in Paris, but its mem-

¹ J.-B. Monfalcon, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

² *Der Deutsche Volksverein*, Paris, November 1833.

³ Kowalski, Werner, *Vorgeschichte und Entstehung des Bundes der Gerechten*, Berlin, 1962, S.S. 177-78.

bers attempted to organise branches in Germany. It had close links with the French Society of the Seasons, a secret Blanquist organisation, and when the Blanquists led an uprising in Paris on 12 May, 1839, members of the League joined the insurgents. The uprising, poorly prepared and lacking broad support among the working population, was quickly put down and most of the members of the League of the Just were forced to leave France. Some went to Switzerland, others to England, and this played a decisive role in the reorganisation of the League.

After the events of May, 1839, the executive organ of the League of the Just, known as the Popular Chamber (Volkshalle), remained in Paris, but the real organisational centre was in London, which in fact opened up for the League a whole new range of possibilities. The dramatic pace of the industrial revolution in England in the forties of the last century, the enormous changes taking place in economics, politics and the structure of the population, the intensification of the class struggle, which by 1842 had reached unprecedented scope and intensity, served to raise the level of political development and class consciousness of the members of the League. They still looked to Paris as their homeland and centre of the revolutionary movement, but the influence of secret, conspiratorial French societies gradually declined, and finally ceased altogether.

The members and leaders of the League of the Just began to realise that revolution cannot be brought about by conspiracy and by the sole efforts of conspirators. However, though they had lost faith in conspiratorial methods of struggle, they knew no others. The views of these artisans and factory workers were still unstable

and confused in many respects: they were attracted first by the egalitarian worker communism of Wilhelm Weitling, then by the utopian 'peaceful' communism of Etienne Cabet, whose influence increased considerably after the defeat of the Blanquists in May, 1839. Cabet called for the peaceful propaganda of the ideas of communism, for the creation of communist settlements which, by their example, would point the way to equality and happiness. Cabet and his supporters did not understand that, under capitalism, such 'islands of happiness and freedom' are doomed to perish. Many of the leaders of the League did not share Cabet's illusions regarding the communist colonies, but saw as their main aim the peaceful propagation of socialist ideas. As such propaganda could be conducted openly and legally in England, they founded, on 7 February, 1840, the German Workers' Educational Society.

Very soon this society became, in effect, a branch of the League of the Just, and it conducted its activity with such vigour that the London branch of the League became its centre. From here contacts were established with Paris, with groups in Switzerland and with Germany. Propaganda work became European in scale.

The rejection of revolutionary struggle was the natural consequence of the defeat of worker uprisings. Neither the leaders of the League of the Just nor other leaders of the working class realised as yet that these defeats were the result of the low level of consciousness and organisation among the workers and their poor understanding of the aims or objectives of the struggle. At the same time, however, every step forward by the working-class movement, every new failure in its open conflict with the owner class, intensified

the need to understand what was happening, the need for more effective organisation, and the need for a teaching that would clearly show the workers how and for what they would have to struggle and what were their immediate aims and prospects. This explains why one of the most popular activities in the proletarian societies, circles and associations of the day were debates on the ideas and theories of Fourier, Owen, Cabet, Proudhon, Weitling and others.

Wilhelm Weitling was one of the most popular leaders and ideologists of the early working-class movement, and had won fame and recognition with his book *The Guarantees of Harmony and Freedom*, published in 1842. This book was enthusiastically received by democratically minded circles, and the workers passed it from hand to hand until the pages were worn away. Marx described this work as a 'vehement and brilliant literary debut of the German workers'. 'It is enough to compare these gigantic infant shoes of the proletariat,' he wrote, 'with the dwarfish, worn-out political shoes of the German bourgeoisie, and one is bound to prophesy that the German Cinderella will one day have the figure of an athlete.'¹

His books, and his propaganda activity conducted in various European countries reflected both the strong and the weak points of Weitling's teaching. He believed that, as it had been logically proven that communism was the best way of organising human society, its advent was inevitable, and therefore the ways and means must be

sought to implement communist ideals as quickly as possible. In this respect, Weitling differed little from other Utopian Socialists. However, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen counted upon support from the ruling classes, whereas Weitling, whose ideas were closely akin to those of the great Utopian Socialists who preceded Marxism, strove first and foremost to awaken the class consciousness of the German workers. He tirelessly emphasised that the oppressed and the oppressors were divided by irreconcilable contradictions. His class instinct as a proletarian led him to realise that 'everything which exists bears within it the seed and nutriment for revolution...'² However, he envisaged this revolution as a spontaneous eruption, and not as the result of historical development and as the highest form of class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Although he was a tireless critic of the capitalist system, actively propagating communist ideas among artisans and factory workers, Weitling did not single out the workers from among the overall mass of oppressed and exploited. In his opinion, the most revolutionary element in society was the lumpen-proletariat, and it was with their help that he intended to transform the world. He put before the leaders of the League of the Just a plan for a social revolution in the name of communism to be carried out by an army of 20-40 thousand thieves, bandits and declassed and embittered elements of society, who would begin a guerilla war against property owners. The plan was, understandably, rejected. However, his suggestion that a discus-

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Critical Marginal Notes on the Article "The King of Prussia and Social Reform. By a Prussian"', in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 201-02.

² W. Weitling, *Garantien der Harmonie und Freiheit*, Berlin, 1955, S. 274.

sion be held on the future work of the League, on its objectives and the prospects for the proletarian movement, was adopted. The discussion began in February, 1845 and continued for a year at meetings of the German Workers' Educational Society in London. One of the first conclusions came to was that the invention of private property, the falsification of religion, and nationalism had caused mankind all its sufferings, and only through enlightenment could the earth be turned into a garden, and mankind into a single family.¹

This ideal of social order and the means of achieving it remained a focal point of debate right to the end. Certain questions troubled everyone: why had communism not been achieved earlier? If mankind had matured sufficiently for a communist society, why was it that poverty, destitution and oppression were becoming more and more widespread among working people, while wealth and luxury were increasing and concentrating in the hands of a few? How was this situation to be changed? How were the ideas of communism to be turned into a reality? Were equality, freedom and justice to be obtained by peaceful propaganda or by armed struggle?

Here one might point to an amazing historical coincidence. As the workers were arguing over the possibility of implementing communism, Marx and Engels were beginning work on *The German Ideology*, where, with great clarity and precision, they showed that all communist theories and opinions up to that point had been essentially utopian, expressing the dreams

and hopes of mankind, whereas proletarian communism, communism as a teaching on the struggle and emancipation of the working class, emerges only with the development of large-scale industry and the appearance of an industrial proletariat. The practical implementation of communist ideals is to be achieved not by dreams and pious wishes. 'In order to abolish the *idea* of private property, the *idea* of communism is quite sufficient,' wrote Marx in 1844, but 'it takes *actual* communist action to abolish actual private property.'²

Some of the leaders of the proletariat saw peaceful propaganda work as the only way to bring about social changes. Shapper declared that it was impossible to force mankind to act if it still had not assimilated the ideas of communism. Even more naive was his assertion that 'first all men must embrace each other as brothers, and then communism will be achieved'.³

Weitling, on the other hand, passionately defended the revolutionary path to communism. 'All the freedoms of which various people boast,' he argued, 'were won only thanks to revolution... Revolution is an excellent means of unification and enlightenment.'⁴ He was supported by Bauer, who convincingly argued that peaceful propaganda alone would not bring about communism, for 'those who possess property will never give way unless compelled by a powerful physical event'.⁵

Although the discussion revealed differences

¹ 'Diskussionen in Kommunistischen Arbeiterbildungsverein in London', *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. 1, S. 214.

² K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 313.

³ *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. 1, S. 218.

⁴ *Ibid.*, S. 223.

⁵ *Ibid.*, S. 225.

of opinion as regards the ways and means of achieving communism, not one of those taking part ever mentioned that social change and revolutionary activity must be based on a scientific theory. The struggle of the proletariat was given an emotional, a religious or a utopian basis, but never a scientific one. 'We must make use of everything,' argued Weitling. 'Emotion can achieve that which, in many people, reason cannot.'¹ A year later the leaders of the League of the Just criticised Marx and Engels for their one-sidedness. 'Let the philosopher develop his communism scientifically....' they wrote from London to Brussels. 'Do not damn the sentimentalist when he enthuses over universal brotherhood... Let religious communism show its own value, do not condemn it out of hand... Not everyone is a great economist as you are, and therefore do not demand that everyone understand communism as you understand it.'²

This tolerance of various forms of communism, this failure to understand that only a communism based on economic, materialist foundations could provide a truly scientific revolutionary world outlook, were typical of the working-class movement of the day. However, the proletariat was already beginning to feel the need for a theory that would explain its position in the contemporary world and provide it with firm guidelines in its struggle to transform society. Therefore it is not surprising that towards the end of the discussion, in January, 1846, Shapper said: 'I think a genuine system will be created by our new German philosophers...'³ He was thinking

primarily of Marx and Engels.

During his first visit to England (1842-44), Engels had established fairly stable links with the Chartists and the socialist followers of Owen. In the spring of 1843 he made the acquaintance of Shapper, Moll and Bauer, leaders of the League of the Just. Later he declared that 'they were the first revolutionary proletarians' he had met. 'I shall never forget,' he wrote in 1885, 'the deep impression that these three real men made upon me, who was then still only wanting to become a man.'⁴

The leaders of the League suggested to Engels that he become a member, but their differences of opinion were still quite considerable and it took several years to remove them.

It was not until later, in the summer of 1845, that the leaders of the League made the acquaintance of Marx, who had come to England with Engels to make a study of English economic literature and establish contact with the English workers' movement.

Shapper, Moll and Bauer produced an ambiguous impression on Marx at that time. On the one hand, they represented the proletarian movement, but on the other, they were strongly influenced by petty-bourgeois, sentimental, so-called 'true' socialism, rejected revolutionary methods of struggle and did not have close contacts with the English Chartists. As to the impression which Marx himself produced on the workers, this can be judged to some extent by the recollections of the German worker Friedrich Lessner, who joined the Communist League in 1848.

¹ *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. 1, S. 216.

² *Ibid.*, S. 379.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 236.

⁴ F. Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 175.

It was there that he met Marx, about whom he later wrote with undisguised admiration: 'Marx was then still a young man, about 28 years of age, but nonetheless he produced a powerful impression upon us all. He was of average height, broad-shouldered, well-built and energetic. He had a high, well-shaped forehead, thick, jet-black hair, and a penetrating glance. Even then his mouth had that sarcastic expression so feared by his opponents. He was a born popular leader. His speech was laconic, coherent and compellingly logical. He was never verbose; each sentence expressed an idea, and each idea was a necessary link in the chain of his argumentation. Marx had nothing of the dreamer about him. The more I came to perceive the difference between the communism of the Weitling period and that of the Communist *Manifesto*, the clearer it became to me that Marx represented the adulthood (maturity) of socialist thought.'¹

During their stay in England, Marx and Engels helped to establish and develop links between the left-wing Chartists and representatives of the League of the Just, and both took part in the conference of Chartists and emigres from various countries which was held in the middle of August, 1845, at the 'Angel' inn in London. It was at this conference that the idea first arose of creating an international revolutionary organisation in London, and this idea was warmly supported by Engels when he addressed the conference. This international revolutionary organisation was founded on 22 September, 1845, after Marx and Engels had left England. Named

'The Brother Democrats', it was led by proletarian elements—the left-wing Chartists (Harney, later Jones), and by Shapper and Moll from the League of the Just.

The inaugural meeting held on 22 September, 1845, which laid the foundations of an international workers' association, also provided Engels with the opportunity of outlining in printed form the principles of proletarian internationalism. The proletarians in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy and one and the same struggle. The great mass of the proletarians are, by their very nature, free from natural prejudices, and their whole disposition and movement is essentially humanitarian, anti-nationalist. Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternisation between nations.²

Involvement in 'The Brother Democrats' association undoubtedly had a great influence on the ideological development of the League of the Just. In November, 1846, its central organ, the Popular Chamber, whose membership included Shapper and Moll, informed all the communities of the League that a congress was to be convened on 1st May, 1847, and that its main task would be to elaborate the League's own communist programme. By that time, however, it had become clear that neither Shapper nor Moll, nor the other leaders of the League were capable of drawing up a programme of action for the working class based upon clearly-formulated principles. The search for ideological leaders finally led the League to Marx and Engels, to

¹ Friedrich Lessner, *Ich brachte das 'Kommunist Manifest'* zum Drucker, Berlin, 1975, S. 67.

² F. Engels, 'The Festival of Nations in London', in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, 1976, p. 6.

those 'new German philosophers' who, by the end of 1846, had indeed created a 'genuine system of communism' and had begun to propagate it, explaining its basic tenets to the workers.

Having theoretically substantiated the historical role of the proletariat as the leading class of bourgeois society, a class capable of rallying around itself all oppressed people and leading them in the struggle against the rule of capital, Marx and Engels arrived at a conclusion of fundamental and world-historical importance. If it is to destroy the rule of private property, bring about a proletarian revolution, take power into its own hands and build a new, communist society, the working class must have its own political party. Although it was only in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that this idea was first clearly formulated, the need for such a party had become clear to Marx and Engels while they were working on *The German Ideology*. The working-class movement was then mainly under the influence of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, which meant that this bourgeois ideology had to be countered by a scientific communist theory as the ideology of the militant vanguard of the working class. This vanguard was to include the most developed and conscious workers. However, the number of such workers was so small that, in the words of Engels, 'one had to seek /them/ out one by one...'.¹ Consequently the party could not be a mass organisation, but it must nonetheless have deep and stable links with the masses. Under no circumstances could the party be permitted to close in

on itself and become a kind of sect. There already existed inward-looking, sectarian organisations of artisans and factory workers, and the theoretical immaturity and organisational weakness of the various proletarian movements divided the working class, reduced the force of its demonstrations, undermined its militancy and, therefore, also eroded its belief in the successful outcome of the struggle.

The international principle underlying the party structure was a result of the small numbers of advanced workers and the absence in Europe of mass proletarian organisations. However, this was not the only consideration upon which Marx and Engels based themselves when they conceived of the party as an international detachment of Communists. The party had to conduct a struggle to achieve the common, international goals of the proletariat, as well as to resolve national problems in each individual country. Furthermore, the imminent European revolution also made it essential to rally together at an international level the best representatives of the working class.

Marx and Engels decided upon communist corresponding committees as the most convenient form of organisation for uniting revolutionary forces at the international level. The first such Corresponding Committee was set up in Brussels in January, 1846, and its task was to establish permanent links between German, French and English socialists in order to discuss questions of theory, criticise utopian systems and formulate a common viewpoint. The Corresponding Committees also dealt with organisational issues—they were to identify and draw together the forces capable of constituting the core of an international proletarian party.

¹ F. Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes Vol. 3, p. 189.

The first measure undertaken by the Brussels Committee was to write to socialists and Communists in different parts of Germany and propose that they set up similar organisations. As a result, regular contact was established with socialists in Cologne, Elberfeld, Westphalia and Silesia. Shortly thereafter, Corresponding Committees were established in Paris and London, the latter being joined by Shapper, Moll and Bauer from the League of the Just. Their links with the Brussels Committee helped them to free themselves of utopian views and adopt scientific communism.

The international nature of the Corresponding Committees was determined not only by their membership but also by their activity. At meetings of the Brussels Committee, for example, discussions were held on the basic questions of the socialist movement in Germany, Britain, France and Belgium, while in their speeches, articles and circulars addressed to the workers' movement in various countries, Marx and Engels strove to show those involved that the errors in their political activities stemmed from false theories and erroneous ideas.

Forty years later, Engels advised Communists in the USA to pursue a similar policy—'to go in for any general working-class movement, accept its *faktische* starting point as such, and work it gradually up to the theoretical level by pointing out how every mistake made, every reverse suffered, was a necessary consequence of mistaken theoretical views in the original programme'.¹

From virtually the very first moment of its

existence, the Brussels Committee waged a vigorous campaign against the utopian views of Weitling, which had begun to hold back the development of the workers' movement in Germany. To begin with, Marx and Engels hoped that they would be able to help Weitling free himself of utopian views and his tendency towards a religious-sectarian interpretation of communism. They invited him to move to Brussels, and included him on the Corresponding Committee. However, Weitling continued to deny the need for the proletariat to engage in political struggle and remained a supporter of spontaneous rebellion. He opposed the revolutionary intelligentsia, and, in the words of Engels, saw communism not as a revolutionary science, but as 'a recipe for the realisation of heaven on earth ready-made...'.¹ As a result, at a meeting of the Brussels Committee held on 30 March, 1846, matters came to an open clash and split.

Having subjected the views of Weitling to severe criticism, Marx and Engels pointed to the need to develop a general theory that would be capable of uniting all those seeking to achieve a transformation of existing social relations. To appeal to the workers, insisted Marx, 'without a strictly scientific idea and a positive teaching, is equivalent to empty and dishonest preaching where, on the one hand, there is supposed to be an inspired prophet, and on the other, only asses are admitted, who listen to him open-mouthed...'.²

The news of the break with Weitling was

¹ Engels to Florence Kelley-Wischniewetzky in New York, December 28, 1886 in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 377.

¹ F. Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 180.

² *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Moscow, 1983, p. 7 (in Russian).

passed on to all groups of socialists and Communists who maintained contacts with the Brussels Committee, and the majority supported Marx and Engels.

No less important was the campaign waged by the Brussels Committee and its leaders against so-called 'true' socialism, which at the time exerted a considerable influence on the progressive intelligentsia and many workers. An open attack against this movement was launched in connection with the activity of Hermann Kriege, a German journalist and representative of the movement who had emigrated to the USA and had begun to publish a newspaper there called *The People's Tribune*. The propaganda work conducted by Kriege in this newspaper under the name of 'communism' provoked sharp criticism from Marx and Engels, who set forth their main line of argument at a meeting of the Brussels Committee held on 11 May, 1846. The meeting adopted a resolution on the propaganda work conducted by Kriege which declared that it 'is compromising in the highest degree to the Communist Party both in Europe and America'. 'The fantastic emotionalism which Kriege is preaching in New York under the name of "communism" must have an extremely damaging effect on the workers' morale if it is adopted by them.' One of the main points in the resolution is a criticism of Kriege's 'economic naivety'. He believed that all social contradictions could be resolved by turning everyone into a small-scale property owner and giving all who were in need a small allotment of land. This dream that everyone 'should be turned into a *private-property owner*,' wrote Marx and Engels, is absolutely unreal and even reactionary, and 'is just as practicable and communist as that everybody

should be turned into an emperor, king or pope.'¹

Marx's and Engels' criticism of 'true' socialism and its ideologists was also printed in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler Zeitung*. In their articles they showed that the idealistic theories of petty-bourgeois socialists, their failure to understand the actual laws of social development, was matched by their practical activity. They directed all their efforts to finding miraculous methods of instantly solving all social problems and establishing paradise on earth. For Kriege, this method consisted in giving all working people a piece of land; for the Proudhonists, who still had considerable influence in the Paris communities of the League of the Just, this method was non-monetary exchange and interest-free credit. While it is true that Marx's devastating criticism of Proudhonism in *The Poverty of Philosophy* published in July, 1847, was of tremendous theoretical significance, there can be no doubt of the practical value of the work done by Engels between 1846 and 1847 to reveal to the Paris workers the petty-bourgeois nature of the ideas of Proudhon. In the course of lengthy and heated discussions, Engels was gradually able to convince the workers that the struggle to change the social order could only be successful if based on the ideas of scientific, proletarian communism. Against Proudhon's plans to peacefully secure the happiness of mankind, Engels put forward a programme for communist activity, which he briefly formulated as follows: '1) to safeguard the interests of the proletariat as against those of the bourgeoisie; 2) to do this through the abolition of private property and its

¹ K.Marx and F.Engels, 'Circular Against Kriege' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 35, 43, 44.

replacement by community of goods; 3) to recognise no means of carrying out these objects other than a democratic revolution by force.¹

Slowly but surely the other communities of the League also freed themselves from the influence of Weitling and Proudhon and the ideas of 'true' socialism. This process was particularly marked in London, to which the central organ of the League, the Volkshalle, was transferred in November, 1846. Leading members of the League became more and more convinced of the correctness of the ideas of Marx and Engels.

In January, 1847, the Volkshalle sent Moll to Brussels to hold talks with the Brussels Communist Corresponding Committee and invite Marx and Engels to join the League of the Just. In the course of the talks it became clear that the leaders of the League in London were prepared to reorganise the League according to the principles of scientific communism. The leaders of the League were, according to Moll, convinced of the correctness of the new theory, and suggested that Marx and Engels should present their views at the forthcoming congress, and also publish them in the form of a manifesto.

In fact, therefore, Marx and Engels now had the opportunity to turn an already existing workers' organisation into the core of an emerging international proletarian party. All that was needed was that this organisation should be restructured in accord with their theory. Both now agreed to join the League.

The congress was postponed from May to June to give time to prepare for it. During the congress it was proposed to reorganise the League

completely, draw up new Rules, discuss questions relating to the programme, the League newspaper, etc.

Marx immediately informed his colleagues in Germany and elsewhere about the results of the talks, and suggested not only that they join the League, but also that they take an active part in its restructuring.

On 2 June, 1847, the congress of the League of the Just opened in London. Marx himself was unable to attend due to material difficulties, and the Brussels Communists were represented by Wilhelm Wolff. Engels was the representative of the Paris communities of the League.

Energy, vast erudition, clarity of thought and firmness of position won for Engels a leading role at the congress, where he was directly involved in all decision-making. The new Rules of the League reflected the organisational principles upon which he and Marx had insisted: the structure of the League was simplified, the terms of membership precisely defined, and the leadership became elective and removable. The Rules also rejected any cult of the personality, 'superstitious belief in authority',¹ and were based on the principles of democracy and centralism. The congress was declared to be the highest organ of the League and, during the periods between congresses, executive power went to the Central Committee of the League. None of the secret communist organisations had ever been organised on such democratic principles.

However, the congress did not carry through all of Marx's and Engels' proposals. The Rules still

¹ Engels to Marx in Brussels, September 18, 1846 in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 27.

¹ Marx to Wilhelm Blos, November 10, 1877 in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 291.

contained sections reminiscent of the old League, and the aims of the new organisation were not defined with sufficient clarity. It was decided that the final draft of the Rules would be adopted at the following congress. Meanwhile copies were sent to all communities for discussion.

On the suggestion of Marx and Engels, the League of the Just was renamed the League of Communists. The old name no longer corresponded to the aims of the League. In a circular letter to the members of the League the congress wrote: '...we are distinguished not by the fact that we want justice as such ... but by the fact that we are opposed to the existing social order and private property, by the fact that we want community of property, by the fact that we are communists.'

Also of considerable importance was the congress decision to change the motto of the League from 'All Men are Brothers', which reflected the utopian views of its members, to 'Working Men of All Countries, Unite!'. This revolutionary appeal launched by Marx and Engels and first published in the draft of the new Rules of the League, became the militant slogan of the international proletariat in its struggle against political and social oppression to achieve a new, classless society.

The congress decided that there was urgent need for a short 'Confession of Faith' which was to become a programme document. However, it was then decided to deal with this question step by step, for it was important that the whole of the League be involved in drawing up and debating the draft copy. The 'Draft of

a Communist Confession of Faith' adopted for debate was drawn up chiefly by Engels and interpreted social development on the basis of a materialist concept of history. It is not known when or where this first draft programme of the League of Communists was written, but that it was written by Engels is beyond any doubt, for the original is in his handwriting, and a large section of the text was subsequently incorporated into the new draft, entitled 'The Principles of Communism', prepared by Engels for the Second Congress of the Communist League. It is possible that some of the propositions were included in the draft on the request of other delegates to the congress. The draft itself took the then common catechism form of question and answer.

The congress represented, as it were, the culmination of a long and complex stage in the struggle waged by Marx and Engels to create a revolutionary party of the proletariat. Now there existed within the working-class movement an international organisation whose banner was scientific communism; the process of merging scientific communism and the working-class movement had begun. Ahead lay the important task of developing and consolidating the results achieved so far.

A circular letter sent by the delegates at the congress to the members of the Communist League stated that 'the open proclamation of the principles of the League was a step of vital importance, and that a "Confession of Faith" which, in the space of a few years or even a few months, would no longer correspond to the times and no longer reflect the views of the majority would be as harmful as a good catechism would be useful. Therefore such a

¹ *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. I, S. 481.

step must be taken with extreme care and without haste. On this issue the congress realised that it should put forward not a final draft but rather a constitutive initiative so that the discussions on the draft catechism could serve as nourishment for the newly-awakening League. Therefore the congress decided to prepare an outline-draft and offer it for debate.¹

Immediately after the congress, the Central Committee of the Communist League sent the draft Rules, the draft programme and the circular letter to 10 cities and towns in France, Belgium, Germany England and Switzerland. Emissaries of the Central Committee went to America, Germany, Holland, Norway and Switzerland. Animated debate of the draft began in all the communities of the League.

The organisational centre of all the discussions on the draft programme was London, the home of the Central Committee of the League; the ideological centre was, without any question, Brussels. Marx, Engels and their supporters conducted a thorough debate of the 'Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith', as a result of which a number of major changes were suggested. The Brussels Communists made a major contribution to the drafting of the future programme and the elaboration of the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party in the imminent revolution through articles written by Marx, Engels, Wolff and other members of the League and published in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler Zeitung*, the press organ of the Communist League. Many of their suggestions were used, in one form or another, in drawing up the

¹ *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. I, S. 5, 484-85.

Manifesto of the Communist Party.

Engels arrived in Paris in the middle of October, 1847, and joined in the vigorous debates on the draft programme in the Paris Regional Committee of the League. At the end of October he was entrusted with the task of compiling a new version of the programme. As he began work on the new draft, Engels wrote to Marx and told him that he would do all he could to ensure that the draft 'would contain nothing—save for a few insignificant details—that contradicts our views'.¹

The draft programme drawn up by Engels and called 'The Principles of Communism' represented, in essence, the further development of and supplement to the 'Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith', yet at the same time it was also an original piece of work, the preliminary outline of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Moreover, it was while working on this document that Engels thought of radically changing the form of the 'Programme'. 'Think over the "Confession of Faith" a bit,' he wrote to Marx on 23-24 November, 1847, 'I believe we had better drop the catechism form and call the thing: Communist *Manifesto*. As more or less history has got to be related in it the form it has been in hitherto is quite unsuitable.'²

Indeed, in that part of the 'Principles of Communism' where Engels is dealing with the 'history of the question' he abandons the catechism form of question and answer. 'I begin: What is communism? And then straight to the

¹ Engels to Marx, 23-24 November, 1847 in: Marx/ Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 27, Berlin, S. 107.

² Engels to Marx, November 23-24, 1847 in: *Selected Correspondence*, p. 40.

proletariat—history of its origin, difference from workers in earlier periods, development of the antithesis between proletariat and bourgeoisie, crises, conclusions. In between this all sorts of secondary matters, and in conclusion the Party policy of the Communists, in so far as it should be made public.¹

Today the 'Principles of Communism' is still of considerable importance as the preliminary draft of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* supplementing or clarifying certain of its propositions. Of particular interest is that section in which Engels describes the basic features of communist society, the most important measures to be taken by the proletarian state in order to transform previously existing social relations, and the ways and means of achieving communism. In destroying private property, he wrote, communists seek to create a system whose economic base is social ownership of the means of production and its products, and where competition is replaced by association and free co-operation. Running production in the interests of society according to a single plan and with the participation of all members of society will make it possible to make broad use of production potential in order to satisfy the requirements of all the working people. In these conditions, the class division of society becomes unnecessary. 'Classes came into existence through the division of labour and the division of labour in its hitherto existing form will entirely disappear...'² With it will also

disappear the antithesis between town and village, between intellectual and physical labour. The new society, founded upon new principles of production and distribution, will require new people—'people of all-round development, capable of surveying the entire system of production.'³ Naturally, such a society will also require a development of the forms of the family, national relations, etc.

In the answer to the question about the course and nature of the proletarian revolution, Engels emphasised that, first and foremost, 'it will inaugurate a democratic constitution and thereby, directly or indirectly, the political rule of the proletariat'.² The direct domination of the proletariat, he went on to explain, will be achieved where the proletariat constitutes the majority of the population. In countries 'where the majority of the people consists not only of proletarians but also of small peasants and urban petty bourgeois, who are only now being proletarianised and in their political interests are becoming more and more dependent on the proletariat and therefore will soon have to conform to the demands of the proletariat', the political domination of the proletariat at the first stage of the revolution will be indirect, and the transition to the next stage 'will perhaps involve a second fight'³ in which the proletariat will be ultimately triumphant.

Indicating how the proletariat is to use the establishment of a democratic order, Engels elaborates a programme of the most important

¹ Engels to Marx, November 23-24, 1847 in *Selected Correspondence*, p. 40.

² F. Engels, 'Principles of Communism' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 353.

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 350.

³ Ibid.

measures to be taken during the transitional period. In contrast to the June draft, which contained only three demands, the new draft contains twelve. Later, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* these will be reduced to ten, formulated in more general terms.

Finally, in answer to the question: 'Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?', Engels emphasised that Communists would be the last to object to such a solution, for they 'know only too well that all conspiracies are not only futile but even harmful. They know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily, but that everywhere at all times they have been the necessary outcome of circumstances entirely independent of the will and the leadership of particular parties and entire classes. But they also see that the development of the proletariat is in nearly every civilised country forcibly suppressed, and that thus the opponents of the Communists are working with all their might towards a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat in the end be goaded into a revolution, we Communists will then defend the cause of the proletarians by deed just as well as we do now by word.'¹

The Paris regional committee of the Communist League approved the 'Principles of Communism' drawn up by Engels and adopted it as a draft party programme. Engels was chosen by the Paris communities of the League as their delegate to the Second Congress, and Marx was delegated to represent the Brussels district. The Second Congress was to begin on 29 November, 1847, and

Marx and Engels met in Ostend (Belgian sea port) on 27 November in order to work out a common course of action and agree upon the main questions to be discussed in London. Engels was taking with him his 'Principles of Communism', and Marx probably also had with him a draft programme, for later Engels was to say that, before starting their joint work on the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, he and Marx had each compiled his own programme separately prior to the congress. Unfortunately, the documents of the Second Congress of the Communist League have not been discovered, and therefore nothing is known of Marx's draft programme. However, what is known is that during the ten days of the congress, Marx revealed his devastating logic, his power of argumentation, his vast erudition, his firm conviction, his intellectual flexibility and his ability to take his audience with him and help them get rid of doubts and hesitations.

The Programme was, naturally, a focal point of debate at the congress. In the course of heated debates Marx and Engels defended the new principles, giving a detailed and precise explanation of the main tenets of scientific communism. 'All contradictions and doubts were finally set at rest,' Engels wrote later, 'the new basic principles were unanimously adopted, and Marx and I were commissioned to draw up the *Manifesto*.'

The congress came to an end on 8 December, 1847, but Marx and Engels spent a few more days in London, and it is quite likely that dur-

¹ F. Engels, 'Principles of Communism' in Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 349-50.

¹ F. Engels, 'On the History of the Communist League' in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 182.

**'THIS LITTLE BOOKLET IS WORTH
WHOLE VOLUMES...'**

ing this time they drew up a rough draft or *conspicuous* of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and discussed it with the members of the Central Committee. However that may be, on the first page of the *Manifesto* it is stated that the *Manifesto* was compiled in London by 'communists of various nationalities'.¹ Nonetheless, there still remained a great deal of work to do, and therefore Marx and Engels took back with them the draft programmes they had presented at the congress, together with other congress documents, having been instructed 'to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party programme'.²

They worked together on the programme in Brussels until Engels left for Paris towards the end of December, 1847, and Marx then finished the programme by himself in January, 1848. The manuscript was dispatched to London at the end of January, 1848, and in February, almost simultaneously with the news of the revolution in Paris, a small printing press at 46, Liverpool St., issued the 23-page pamphlet, the spirit of which, in the words of Lenin, 'to this day ... inspires and guides the entire organised and fighting proletariat of the civilised world'.³

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 481.

² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, (Preface to the English Edition of 1888), p. 17.

³ V. I. Lenin, 'Frederick Engels' in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 10.

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* summarised, as it were, the development of Marxist theory up to 1848. By now the theory was virtually complete, and it constituted an integral philosophy, a radically new concept of the cognition and transformation of the world. This new concept formed the basis of the programme of the Communist League, the first international party of the revolutionary proletariat.

One of the basic principles of this party and of the teaching that formed the ideological basis of its struggle was—and remains to this day—the unity of theory and practice. The definition of the theoretical principles of scientific communism in the first two chapters of the *Manifesto* is therefore logically followed in Chapter III by a critique of various trends of non-proletarian socialism, while the fourth, concluding chapter contains a description of the tactics of the proletariat in various countries.

In Chapter I, 'Bourgeois and Proletarians', Marx and Engels explain the historical inevitability of a communist revolution. The chapter opens with one of the most important conclusions formulated by Marx and Engels while elaborating the concept of historical materialism: 'The history

⁴ V. I. Lenin, 'Frederick Engels' in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 24.

of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.¹ Commenting in 1888 upon this statement, Engels pointed out that it refers to those socio-economic systems which emerged on the ruins of the primitive community. It was precisely the disintegration of this primitive community that marked the beginning of the division of society 'into separate, and finally antagonistic classes'.² It is necessary to note here what Marx himself underlined later in a letter to one of his colleagues, Joseph Weydemeyer, a member of the Communist League, who emigrated to the USA after the defeat of the 1848-49 revolution: '...no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes.'³ The immortal and indisputable achievement of Marx himself was that he put this discovery on a scientific footing, proving that 'the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production'.⁴ Furthermore, having examined the nature of the development of the class struggle in contemporary society, Marx came to the conclusion that this struggle 'necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat', and that 'this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition

of all classes and to a classless society...'⁵

Having briefly reviewed the whole of preceding history from this point of view, Marx and Engels then move on to a description of bourgeois society. 'The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.'⁶

Why did the authors of the *Manifesto* find it necessary to underscore this point? Because the bourgeois society in which they lived was still young, and many continued to believe in the sincerity of the rallying cry it had used to establish its domination. 'Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood!'—such was the battle-cry of the French people as they stormed the Bastille, and victory over monarchy and feudalism seemed to be the guarantee of the fulfillment of these demands. However, the people had been deceived, and they did not receive either genuine liberty or actual equality. The 'third estate' whose interests at the time of the French Revolution appeared to coincide with the interests of the people, oppressed by feudal lords and absolutism, developed into the class of capitalists, and it soon became clear that the interests of the working people and the interests of this class were directly opposed as the interests of the haves and the have-nots, of the exploiters and the exploited. Having removed the feudal lords from power, the class of bourgeois, of capi-

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 482.

² *Ibid.*

³ Marx to J. Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852 in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 528.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Marx to J. Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852 in: Marx, Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 528.

⁶ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 485.

talists, also pushed its conflict with them into the background. Now the main contradiction was between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between capital and labour, and this new class contradiction determined 'new forms of struggle'.¹

The new age, the age of the bourgeoisie, had made this class contradiction more apparent. Of all the countries of Europe, England most clearly illustrated that 'society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat'.² For this reason the authors of the *Manifesto* go on to examine the process of the formation and development of these two basic classes in capitalist society, and to analyse their struggle. This analysis is reduced, in effect, to an analysis of the two basic prerequisites of a communist revolution, or, as Marx called them in *The German Ideology*, the 'material elements of a complete revolution ... namely, on the one hand the existing productive forces, on the other the formation of a revolutionary mass, which revolts not only against separate conditions of the existing society, but against the existing "production of life" itself...'³

The first half of the chapter looks at the development of the productive forces, the development of industry, and with it the growth and expansion of the world market. This development occurs under the domination and leadership of the bourgeoisie, which everywhere pitilessly de-

stroys feudal, patriarchal and idyllic relations and replaces them with links based on naked self-interest, on callous 'cash payment'. Of all liberties, the bourgeoisie gives its preference to one—free trade, removing from the exploitation of man by man all the religious and political illusions that concealed it in former ages, and introducing an exploitation that is open, direct and shameless.

As 'the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange' the bourgeoisie, in its turn, 'cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society'.⁴ Furthermore, while the former industrial classes strove to preserve the customary mode of production, the bourgeoisie is characterised by constant motion, the constant destruction of the old and ossified, and this leads to 'the uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions'.⁵

The authors of the *Manifesto* pay particular attention to the dialectic nature of the effect of the capitalist mode of production on national and international relations. On the one hand, concentration of the means of production, property and population led to political centralisation, to a situation in which previously 'independent or but loosely connected provinces with separate interests, laws, governments and systems of taxation, become lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one

¹ K.Marx, F.Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 485.

² Ibid.

³ K.Marx, F.Engels, 'The German Ideology' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 54.

⁴ K.Marx, F.Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 486.

⁵ Ibid., p. 487.

⁶ Ibid.

national class-interest, one frontier and one customs tariff.¹ On the other hand, the emergence and expansion of a world market, and the internationalisation of production and consumption, have removed the national basis from beneath industry. Age-old national branches of manufacture are replaced by 'new industries whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilised nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe'.²

By thus drawing even the most backward nations into the process of industrial, bourgeois development, capitalism renders them dependent on the civilised countries, renders agricultural nations dependent on bourgeois nations, the East dependent on the West. As modern experience has shown, the developed capitalist countries then try to make this dependence permanent as it enables them to obtain raw materials and a cheap labour force.

At the same time, however, this rapid development of the productive forces and the internationalisation of production and the involvement of more and more peoples in the production process literally revolutionise society. First created within the feudal system, 'the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up'³ soon found themselves restricted within the framework of feudal property relations, which 'hindered production instead of developing it... They became so many

fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.'⁴ The bourgeois revolutions, which occurred first in England and France, consolidated the economic and political domination of the new class. 'The executive of the modern State,' declares the *Manifesto*, 'is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.'⁵

In full accord with the materialist concept of history, Marx and Engels show that such a dialectic form of development is also characteristic of bourgeois society. The bourgeoisie proves incapable of controlling the powerful productive forces it had created, for their further progress is restricted by the narrow confines of the private-property relations 'that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule'.⁶ Epidemics of over-production and periodic trade crises are the means by which the contemporary productive forces protest against the production relations that restrain them. During such crises, society regresses, for 'a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces of capitalist society are periodically destroyed'.⁷

And this happens because the productive forces at the disposal of capitalist society 'no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder

¹ Ibid., pp. 488-89.

² Ibid., p. 488.

³ Ibid., p. 489.

⁴ Ibid., p. 489.

⁵ Ibid., p. 486.

⁶ Ibid., p. 489.

⁷ Ibid.

into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property'.¹

It would be naive to assume that the bourgeoisie calmly accepts such a state of affairs. On the contrary, striving to maintain the domination of private property and its own economic and political power, the bourgeoisie does everything it can to overcome and eliminate these crises. But how? 'On the one hand, by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

'The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself.'²

Thus highly developed productive forces become the first prerequisite of the transformation of society. Since, under capitalism, production is social in its nature, it finds itself in contradiction with the private-property form of appropriation. The elimination of this contradiction is possible only by ensuring that the form of appropriation, the distribution of the produce, corresponds to the form of production, and this can be achieved by abolishing private property and establishing social ownership, that is, by a communist revolution.

At this point Marx and Engels move on to analyse the emergence and development of the proletariat, which is the objective force destined by history to abolish capitalist production relations and establish new, communist ones. This

¹ Ibid., p. 490.

² Ibid.

force is engendered by industrial development, develops alongside it, and is recruited from among nearly all classes and strata of society. The transformation of a large portion of the population into factory workers constitutes the first stage in the emergence of the proletariat. In general, the conditions of life and work for the mass of factory workers under the rule of capital are the same, particularly at the beginning, and it is this that gives them all common interests. As a result, the proletariat already constitutes a class in the social sense of the term.

However, if the proletariat is to become a politically independent force, it (or at least its vanguard) must appreciate its position in the system of social relations, understand its historical destiny and acquire experience of practical and organised struggle. The *Manifesto* looks at various aspects of this process whereby an initially amorphous and weak working class is transformed into a powerful, political, revolutionary force capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and establishing its political domination.

Having noted that the development of the proletariat involves its numerical growth, its organisational unity and increasing consciousness, Marx and Engels devote particular attention to the last factor, pointing out in particular that, in the course of their struggle with the feudal aristocracy, and 'later on, with those portions of the bourgeoisie itself whose interests have become antagonistic to the progress of industry',¹ the bourgeoisie is obliged to turn for help to the workers and to rely upon their

¹ Ibid., p. 493.

force. In thus drawing the working class into the political movement, the bourgeoisie itself 'supplies the proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the proletariat with weapons for fighting the bourgeoisie'.¹

The enlightenment of the proletariat is also brought about to a large degree by changes in the social structure of society as a result of the development of capitalism. Impoverishment as a result of the competitive struggle constantly brings into the ranks of the working class both individual representatives and entire sections of the class of property owners, and they bring with them their education. The more intense this process, the more important the role played by such elements.

In those periods when the class struggle becomes particularly acute, the process of disintegration within the ruling class is rapidly accelerated. As a result, a section of the ruling class renounces its own class and adopts the position of the revolutionary class to whom the future belongs. Thus a section of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, in particular, 'a portion of bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole'.²

Changes in the external conditions of the existence of the proletariat have a marked influence on its development. However, this development is determined to an even greater extent by the active involvement of the proletariat in shaping and transforming those conditions. When speak-

ing of this active involvement Marx and Engels have in mind the class struggle of the proletariat. In the *Manifesto* they showed how this struggle changed in both content and scale. As it passes through its various phases—from isolated demonstrations by individual proletarians and groups of workers, destroying machines, tools and other instruments of production, to the creation of associations to defend wages, and finally to armed uprisings the struggle of the working class gradually grows beyond the limits of a strictly economic struggle, becomes centralised and fuses 'into one national struggle between classes'. But the *Manifesto* goes on to emphasise, 'every class struggle is a political struggle'.¹ This political struggle must ultimately lead to the establishment, via revolution, of the political domination of the proletariat, to the radical transformation of the whole of society.

Defining the economic basis of the world-historical liberating mission of the proletariat, Marx and Engels declare in the *Manifesto*: 'Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product.'²

At the same time, however, the emergence and development of the working class as the most consistently revolutionary force is a complex and contradictory process. On the one hand, the proletariat stands in opposition to capital as it itself owns no private property and is ex-

¹ Ibid., p. 493.

² Ibid., p. 494.

¹ Ibid., p. 493.

² Ibid., p. 494.

exploited and oppressed by capital. On the other hand, the proletariat is itself the product of capitalist production based on private property and is linked to that production by all the conditions of its life and work. The fact that the proletariat has no private property of its own, is exploited and oppressed, gives rise to a revolutionary trend in its development, a tendency to engage in a resolute struggle against capital, while its objective involvement in capitalist production and recognition of the conditions produced by this kind of production as the conditions of its own existence leads to various forms of conciliation and social compromise. At certain stages of development and under certain conditions, the tendency towards compromise may spread to include an entire section of the working class, but in the battle between these two trends the revolutionary tendency finally triumphs. Compromise between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie only benefits the latter. While agreeing to partial, individual concessions, the bourgeoisie never, under any circumstances, relinquishes its dominant position but always dictates to the workers the conditions under which their labour power may be bought and sold.

This contradiction is organically bound up with another. The whole process of capitalist production, the concentration of labour at large enterprises and the class struggle, lead to a situation in which the workers organise themselves, band together, increase their understanding and experience, and acquire class solidarity and consciousness. It is this which determines the success of their struggle. On the other hand, as the *Manifesto* declares, 'this organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a

political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves'.¹ Such competition intensifies in periods of crisis, when the fear of finding themselves unemployed frequently compels the workers to reconcile themselves with increasing exploitation, reduced pay, etc. The bourgeoisie exploits this competition within the working class as a weapon against it, a means of destroying its unity.

Objective processes, and primarily the steady development of the productive forces, strengthen the organisation and unity of the working class, thereby helping it to overcome the internal competition tending to divide it. However, if this process is to become stable and irreversible, there must be conscious and purposeful action, an increase of the level of proletarian class consciousness. Only then can the continuous, albeit concealed, civil war waged between the class of proletarians and the class of bourgeois reach the point where it 'breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat'.²

The conclusion that the victory of the proletariat and the fall of the bourgeoisie are both inevitable concludes Chapter I of the *Manifesto*. However, this conclusion is preceded by two fundamentally important propositions. All former ruling classes (slave-owners, feudal lords, bourgeois), having won for themselves political domination, strove by every means in their power to maintain that domination, to render it perma-

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 493.

² *Ibid.*, p. 495.

ment and to subordinate the whole of society to the form of appropriation most convenient to themselves. On the contrary, argued Marx and Engels, the proletariat, having achieved political domination, must destroy that mode of appropriation under which the private property owners, the powers that be, give the workers merely the crumbs from their table, despite the fact that this table is groaning with food; they give the workers a mere pittance out of the vast wealth the workers have created. By destroying this mode of appropriation, the proletariat also destroys 'every other previous mode of appropriation'.¹ Thus, whereas all previous social movements were movements of the minority or in the interests of the minority, 'the proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority'.² This is the guarantee of its ultimate success.

The second chapter of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, entitled 'Proletarians and Communists', begins with an analysis of the relationship between the two. The main issue discussed in this chapter is the communist transformation of society. A careful reading of the first chapter of the *Manifesto* reveals that it deals with the development of the political struggle waged by the working class prior to the revolution, while Chapter II deals with the development following the revolution.

First of all, Marx and Engels reveal the dialectic of the relationship between a given class and its party. Communists, they underline, 'have no interests separate and apart from those of

the proletariat as a whole'. At the same time, they differ from other proletarian parties in that 'in the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality', and that, at different stages in the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, 'they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole'.¹

The authors of the *Manifesto* then go on to a theoretical substantiation of the vanguard role of the Communist Party in the working-class movement, emphasising that this role derives from 'the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement'.² Taking up the main conclusions drawn in Chapter I to emphasise them once again, they write: 'The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat'.³

In Chapter I of the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels had already shown that a communist revolution is impossible without the necessary material preconditions. Earlier Marx had written that, however often the idea of a communist revolution had been expressed in the course of history, it could not actually take place until those preconditions matured. The ideas of scientific communism, the theoretical basis of the activity of

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

¹ Ibid., p. 497.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 498.

the communist party, 'merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes'.¹ The theory of scientific communism, the ideology of the most advanced class of the modern age, could emerge only at a specific stage in the development of that class and its struggle. With the creation of this theory, the working class was given not only a powerful ideological weapon which would help it to wage a conscious struggle for its liberation. This theory also gave the proletariat a feeling of historical optimism by showing that, despite painful losses and heavy defeats, its struggle would end in victory and the triumph of a new system, a system based on genuine equality and freedom.

Marx and Engels write: 'The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, (this was one of the main criticisms of Marx's teaching then as now—A.S. / but the abolition of bourgeois property.'² However since bourgeois property is 'the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few', the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: 'Abolition of private property!' This no doubt explains why Chapter II is chiefly devoted to the Communists' attitude towards property and to a refutation of the accusation levelled against the Communists that they wish to abolish all property (all property, and not just *private* property) and also the family, nationality, homeland, religion and

ethics. In connection with the problem of property and the communist attitude towards it, this chapter of the *Manifesto* also looks at the question of the individual, labour and education, the question of the family and upbringing, and the question of religion and ethics as part of the question of social consciousness in general.

Two points should be noted in the examination of the above-mentioned problems by the authors of the *Manifesto*. First, the order in which they are examined—property—family—nation—consciousness—is not merely fortuitous. All these categories are clearly-defined elements of the general materialist theory formulated by Marx and Engels, according to which the structure of society is built up as follows: productive forces—production and other social relations—the political superstructure—forms of social consciousness. Secondly, in refuting the allegations of their opponents, the founders of scientific communism describe in one way or another various aspects of the future communist society.

Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasise that Communists in no way intend to abolish the 'personal appropriation of the products of labour, an appropriation that is made for the maintenance and reproduction of human life, and that leaves no surplus wherewith to command the labour of others',¹ any more than they intend to abolish individuality as such, freedom as such, etc. In fact, what is meant is 'the abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom'.²

With implacable and irrefutable consistency, Marx and Engels show that bourgeois private

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

¹ Ibid., p. 499.

² Ibid.

property must be abolished, since 'private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population', and since the necessary condition of the existence of this private property 'is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society'.¹ Bourgeois individuality must be destroyed, since capitalist society recognises 'no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property'.² Bourgeois education and culture must be replaced by social education and culture since in capitalist society, 'that culture ... is, for the enormous majority, a mere training to act as a machine'.³ The bourgeois family naturally disappears in the new society, since the bourgeois family is based 'on capital, on private gain', for which there will be no place under communism. As for the hypocritical cries of the bourgeois to the effect that Communists intend to introduce community of women, the *Manifesto* points out that 'it has existed almost from time immemorial'. In a society in which women can be bought and sold, is it not hypocrisy to speak of the 'sanctity' of marriage, etc.?

Thus, step by step, refuting the objections raised by bourgeois ideologists against communism, Marx and Engels point out that, under communism, accumulated labour will serve not to secure the personal enrichment of capitalists, but will be 'a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the labourer'; that the labourer will acquire the independence

¹ Ibid., p. 500.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 501.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., p. 502.

⁶ Ibid., p. 502.

and individuality of which he is deprived under capitalism; that the nature of upbringing will be altered; that 'the abolition of the present system of production relations must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e., of prostitution both public and private',¹ and that marriage based on economic considerations will give way to marriage based on personal affection. Finally they look at the attitude of Communists towards homeland and nationality. The *Manifesto* raised, for the first time in the history of socialist thought, the question of the relationship of the national and the international in the revolutionary movement, a question of vital importance for that movement, and gave a scientifically grounded answer from the position of the working class.

A number of objective and subjective factors made the question of the relationship of the national and the international one of immediate concern at that time. Among the former, the most important were the internationalisation of socio-economic life (a factor examined in considerable detail in the first chapter of the *Manifesto*), and the growth of national movements, vividly illustrated in the revolutions of 1848-1849 in Europe. The latter included the development of nationalist tendencies within the working-class movement, the struggle by internationalists to combat these tendencies, and the need to draw up a revolutionary strategy which would correctly combine the national and international tasks of the proletariat.

Marx and Engels viewed the working-class movement as a process in which the national and the social formed a dialectical whole. The class-

¹ Ibid., p. 502.

social factor defines the essence or content of this process, while its form or specific features, are determined by the national factor, that is, by the conditions existing in a given country. 'Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national struggle. The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie.'¹ This task is, at the same time, a social, and international task, since the socio-economic position of the proletariat in various countries and the conditions of its emancipation are essentially the same. Under capitalism, the proletariat is primarily an object of exploitation. The conditions of its existence prevent it from sharing in the material wealth of the nation—it is appropriated by the bourgeoisie—and from taking part in the government of the country—this also being the prerogative of the dominant class. It is precisely in this, social sense that 'working men have no country'.² However, it is precisely for this reason, according to Marx and Engels, that the proletariat 'must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself the nation'.³

The polemics over these propositions in the *Manifesto* have continued for many decades. While the left-wing opportunists distort the statement 'working men have no country' to turn it into an expression of national nihilism, right-wing opportunists seek to use the second proposition to substantiate a 'national socialism' incompatible with the prin-

¹ Ibid., p. 493.

² Ibid., p. 502.

³ Ibid., p. 503.

ciples of proletarian internationalism.

Lenin, who was a brilliant exponent of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and who gave wonderful examples of its profound and precise analysis, emphasised that it is totally wrong to separate the first proposition from the second. The true meaning of these two propositions in the *Manifesto* is that the proletariat, rejecting the bourgeois-nationalistic concept of the homeland, is called upon to draw the working masses into the anti-capitalist struggle and become the leading class of the nation in order to lead it in the struggle to achieve socialism. In this case, the national factor in the struggle of the working class becomes international, expressing the common interests of the whole of the international proletariat, independent of nationality, in a form that corresponds to the specific conditions in each country.

At the end of Chapter II, the authors return to the propositions that they formulated at the end of Chapter I in order to examine three essential questions: the proletarian revolution, economic and political transitional measures, and the general characteristics of communist society. 'The first step in the revolution by the working class,' write Marx and Engels, 'is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.'¹ If this is not done, the working class will be unable to achieve the objectives of the transitional period. In effect, these objectives are nothing other than 'to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as

¹ Ibid., p. 504.

the ruling class; and to increase the total sum of productive forces as rapidly as possible'.¹

As regards specific measures to be taken during the transitional period, Marx and Engels, in enumerating them, warn that 'these measures will of course be different in different countries'.² However, in the most developed countries, the socialisation of the means of production must be followed by the 'abolition of property in land', the introduction of a heavy progressive income tax, the abolition of right of inheritance, the confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels, the centralisation of credit and transport in the hands of the state. Further, the authors of the *Manifesto* declare that in the new society work must be obligatory for all citizens, that the difference between town and country must be gradually eliminated, that all children are to receive free public education, etc. The first section of this programme was implemented in Soviet Russia almost immediately following the October Revolution, while the principle of 'equal liability of all to labour' has become fundamental in all socialist countries. The socialist countries are also working consistently to carry through the creative tasks of social transformation indicated in the *Manifesto*.

At the very end of Chapter II there is a brief, generalised description of communist society as a society whose chief characteristic is that it is classless. The disappearance of classes and class distinctions, declares the *Manifesto*, removes the need for state power as a political

¹ Ibid., p. 504.

² Ibid., p. 505.

³ Ibid.

institution used by one class to oppress another. Marx and Engels write: 'All production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation', which means that state power is replaced by the public management of production processes.

The theoretical part of the *Manifesto* ends with the classic definition of the essence of the new, communist order: 'In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.'² These words express the ultimate aim of the communist transformation of society.

The third chapter of the *Manifesto* is devoted to a critique of the main schools of reactionary and conservative bourgeois socialism, and also contains a definition of the fundamental differences between scientific communism, which may justifiably be termed Marxism, and utopian communism. In effect, this chapter reflects the relentless struggle waged by Marx and Engels, while creating the Communist League, against various forms of non-proletarian socialism in order to clear the way for the propagation of scientific socialism.

The most reactionary of these schools of thought was the so-called feudal socialism, which reflected the hopes of the feudal class, defeated by the bourgeois revolutions, for the restoration of its rule, of outdated feudal relations. However, the feudal aristocracy lacked both the strength and the means to fight the bourgeoisie, and the labouring masses did not

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 506.

respond to their slogans, which demanded a return to the past. Therefore, in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy tried to appeal to the working people, making use of their discontent with exploitation and oppression at the hands of the bourgeoisie, and expressing concern about the harsh conditions in which they lived. They even resorted to socialist phraseology, waving 'the proletarian alms-bag in front for a banner'.¹

In the course of its political struggle, the feudal aristocracy revealed its manifest failure to understand the historical inevitability of the rule of bourgeois relations and the emergence of a revolutionary proletariat. Moreover, as it did not even conceal the reactionary nature of its criticism of capitalist society, and in its own political practice took part 'in all coercive measures against the working class'² even profiting from the 'traffic in wool, beetroot-sugar and potato spirits'³, the people did not heed its reactionary slogans.

Hand in hand with feudal socialism went Christian socialism, which constituted a sophisticated defence by ecclesiastical authorities of the rule of the exploiting classes, and preaching 'harmony' and class peace between the capitalists and the workers. The ideological successors of this school of thought are the modern Christian Democrats and Christian Socialists in such countries as Italy, France, the FRG and others.

The development of capitalist relations accelerated the social stratification of burghers and

peasants, a large number of whom were reduced to poverty, squeezed out of agriculture, commerce and manufactures and swelled the ranks of the industrial proletariat. The process was a painful one inasmuch as it involved the loss of property, and for every bourgeois, including the petty bourgeois, loss of property was equivalent to loss of his personality. This was the source of the movement which Marx and Engels named petty-bourgeois socialism. Its literary representatives, the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie took up the defence of small-scale production, sharply criticising the vices and contradictions of the bourgeois system. However, this criticism was put forward from an outdated position, for petty-bourgeois socialism 'aspires either to restoring the old means of production and of exchange, and with them the old property relations, and the old society, or to cramping the modern means of production and of exchange, within the framework of the old property relations that have been, and were bound to be, exploded by those means'.¹

Particular attention is given in this chapter of the *Manifesto* to German or 'true' socialism. The struggle waged by Marx and Engels against representatives of this school of thought during the process of organising a proletarian party has been described above. The critique of this philosophical trend shows Marx's and Engels' ability to analyse any political phenomenon from a concrete historical position. According to Marx and Engels, 'German philosophers, would-be philosophers, and beaux esprits' had forgotten, when importing into Germany the ideas they

¹ Ibid., p. 507.

² Ibid., p. 508.

³ Ibid.

¹ Ibid., p. 509-10.

² Ibid., p. 511.

found in the writings of French socialists reflecting the struggle against the rule of bourgeois relations, that these ideas corresponded to 'French social conditions', which differed considerably from the conditions existing in Germany, where the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudal absolutism had only just begun and the industrial proletariat was only just emerging. As a result, in the hands of the Germans, French socialist-communist literature 'ceased ... to express the struggle of one class with the other',¹ and the proponents of 'true' socialism 'felt conscious of having overcome "French one-sidedness"' and were defending 'not true requirements, but the requirements of Truth; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of Human Nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy'.²

When examining the reasons for the spread of 'true' socialism through wide sections of the public, the authors of the *Manifesto* pointed to its petty-bourgeois essence. The critique of large-scale bourgeois production and the domination of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie, which in France had already become a reality, whereas in Germany they were just emerging, was conducted by the 'true' socialists from the point of view of that strata of society that was doomed to disappear. On the one hand, the petty bourgeoisie is doomed as a result of the concentration of capital, and the consolidation of the industrial and political domination of the big bourgeoisie, and on the other, as a result

of the growth of the revolutionary proletariat. This was why 'true' socialism was eagerly supported by the governments of the German states, for 'it served as a welcome scarecrow against the threatening bourgeoisie' and as 'a sweet finish after the bitter pills of floggings and bullets with which these same governments, just at that time, dosed the German working-class risings'.¹

The confused, vague arguments of the ideologists of 'true' socialism concerning the essential nature of man, his mind and his heart, only distracted the working class from the class struggle and impeded the development of their class consciousness, and therefore Marx and Engels placed 'true' socialism alongside feudal and petty-bourgeois socialism as belonging to the reactionary trend in socialist and communist literature.

After examining reactionary socialism, the *Manifesto* turns to conservative or bourgeois socialism. To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind.² Most of these were representatives of the bourgeoisie and were far from seeking any radical change in the existing order. In the February declaration (1847) of the League of the Just, this 'socialism' was described as one that 'did not propose any new system, but was chiefly engaged in repairing the cracks that have appeared with the passage of time in the

¹ Ibid., p. 511.

² Ibid.

¹ Ibid., p. 512.

² *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. I, S. 456.

old building ... or, at most, in building ... a new storey on the old crumbling foundation called capital'.¹

Although this movement had several trends within it, all its proponents were agreed that bourgeois society was the best, and that it was possible for industrial and agricultural workers within this society to live well and prosper. All that was necessary was that the proletariat should reject class struggle and cease viewing bourgeois society as something alien and hostile to it. The *Manifesto* named Proudhon as the most prominent representative of this school of thought. Marx gave a detailed critique of Proudhon's views in his work *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

Finally, Chapter III contains an extremely important section devoted to critical-utopian socialism and communism in which the authors explain the emergence of utopian socialist systems and views. Since 'the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat',² the utopian socialists try to imagine or discover them. They reject every form of revolutionary action, but wish to attain their ends by an organisation of a society specially contrived by them.

Scientific communism differs fundamentally from utopian communism, and primarily because it is the conscious expression of the interests of the proletariat based upon a correct and objective evaluation of its world-historical role. Furthermore, scientific communism is distinguished

by its materialist concept of history, which serves as its theoretical base, by its recognition of the objective necessity for a communist revolution as the result of the class struggle of the proletariat, and by its view of communist society as the inevitable consummation of objective historical development.

As the working-class movement develops and acquires political independence, scientific communism naturally replaces utopian-communist theories reflecting the early stage of the consciousness of the working class. These become a burden to it as it moves on to conscious historical creativity.

'The significance of Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism bears an inverse relation to historical development,' Marx and Engels write at the end of Chapter III. 'In proportion as the modern class struggle develops and takes definite shape, this fantastic standing apart from the contest, these fantastic attacks on it, lose all practical value and all theoretical justification. Therefore, although the originators of these systems were, in many respects, revolutionary, their disciples have, in every case, formed mere reactionary sects... By degrees they sink into the category of the reactionary conservative Socialists depicted above, differing from these only by more systematic pedantry, and by their fanatical and superstitious belief in the miraculous effects of their social science.'³

The concluding chapter of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*—'Position of the Communists in Relation to the Various Existing Opposition Parties'—is the shortest and also the most gener-

¹ *Der Bund der Kommunisten*, Bd. I, S. 456.

² K. Marx, F. Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 515.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 516-17.

alised. Without going into detail, Marx and Engels indicate the basic principles to be used by Communists in developing their strategy and tactics in various countries at various stages in the struggle and in the context of various levels of development of the working-class movement. All these factors naturally determine the specifics of the practical political activity of the Communist Party as dictated by the concrete historical conditions of the country in which it is operating. Although Marx and Engels cite France, Switzerland, Poland and Germany as examples of the Communists' tactics and their position in relation to other parties, they by no means attempt to force their own point of view on the workers' parties of these countries or to give them 'instructions'. All through their lives, Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasised that their teaching should never be used as a stereotype. The political situation in any country may change for a number of reasons, and it is essential to be politically flexible, to be able to think dialectically, evaluate the situation and work out an appropriate tactic of the struggle for the proletariat on the basis of the fundamental tenets of scientific communism.

It is precisely on the basis of these fundamental tenets that the authors of the *Manifesto* indicate the main principles of the struggle to be waged by Communists in defence of the interests of the proletariat in different countries. 'The Communists,' they declare, 'fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement.'¹ In other words, the objectives and

¹ Ibid., p. 518.

successes of the present struggle should not blind Communists to the ultimate aim of the struggle of the working class, its future prospects, otherwise all the successes achieved today may prove short-lived insofar as only a radical transformation of the existing social relations, only the abolition of the rule of private property can secure those conditions in which the working class—and indeed all working people—will be able to live and work in freedom and develop freely and comprehensively.

Marx and Engels argued that, during a bourgeois-democratic revolution, the proletariat and the proletarian party should give their support to the bourgeoisie and those opposition forces which side with the bourgeoisie against outdated, feudal and absolutist relations, since in this struggle the bourgeoisie cannot succeed without the help of the working class. After its victory, therefore, the bourgeoisie will be obliged to grant its former ally certain democratic liberties and guarantees. Realising, however, that this alliance is temporary and that the proletariat is already aware of its opposition to the bourgeoisie, the latter seeks to reduce the political rights of the working class to the minimum. In this situation, the working class must strive to achieve the broadest possible political liberty, since this will enable it to wage a more active and effective struggle against the bourgeoisie which is seeking to render its domination permanent, and therefore to render permanent the exploitation and oppression of the working people. This is why Marx and Engels emphasise in the *Manifesto* that the Communist Party must work constantly 'to instil into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and pro-

letariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy'.¹

In waging stubborn, ceaseless struggle in defence of the interests of the working class, 'the communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things'.² And because they never for a moment forget the ultimate aim of this struggle—the emancipation of the working class and all working people everywhere and forever—in all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question...³, i.e., the task of changing property relations and replacing the rule of private property with that of social property, for only the introduction and consolidation of social ownership will make it possible to create the conditions necessary for genuine equality and freedom.

The *Manifesto* concludes with the proud, impassioned and confident words 'Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.'

WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES,
UNITE!

Summing up the significance of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Lenin, the great successor of Marx and Engels, wrote: 'With the clarity

¹ Ibid., p. 519.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society'.¹

And he could add, with every justification: 'This little booklet is worth whole volumes.'²

¹ V.I. Lenin, 'Karl Marx', *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, 1977, p. 48.

² V.I. Lenin, 'Frederick Engels', *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 24.

A PROGRAMME ACKNOWLEDGED BY
MILLIONS

One hundred and thirty-five years have passed since the *Manifesto* was first published, yet even today it is impossible not to recognise the truth of the words written by its authors in the preface to the German edition of 1872: 'However much the state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in this *Manifesto* are, on the whole, as correct today as ever.'¹ In this same preface they emphasised that the practical application of the propositions contained in the *Manifesto* will always and everywhere depend on the concrete historical conditions existing at the time. In particular they pointed to the development of large-scale industry, the experience of the revolutions of 1848-49, and especially that of the Paris Commune of 1871, as factors which required that certain propositions in the *Manifesto* be further developed and clarified. This concerned, first and foremost, the question of the need to establish the political rule of the working class—the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the Paris Commune it became clear that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machin-

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, Preface to the German 1872 edition of the *Manifesto* in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 98.

ery, and wield it for its own purposes.'² That machinery must be destroyed and replaced by 'the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat',³ which will constitute the political basis of the state of the transitional period. The validity of this conclusion by Marx was proved later by the Great October Socialist Revolution and the experience of building socialism in the USSR.

The uneven development of the capitalist countries characteristic of the stage of imperialism led to the modification of yet another proposition by the authors of the *Manifesto*. In the middle of the last century, Marx and Engels considered that the victory of a proletarian revolution in one country was impossible. In order to be victorious, they argued, such a revolution is to take place simultaneously in several of the most advanced capitalist countries. By creatively applying the Marxist dialectical method in his study of the economics and contradictions of the capitalist countries in the new period, Lenin showed that in the period of imperialism—the period of the decline and decay of capitalism—it is possible to break the chain of capitalist states at its weakest link. The aggravation of the contradictions between the imperialist states would help to ensure the victory of the proletarian revolution in Russia which, as Lenin argued, was destined to initiate the socialist revolution. The worker solidarity movement in the capitalist countries would be a reliable ally of this revolution in its struggle against

² K. Marx, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' in: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 26.

³ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 500.

attempts on the part of international imperialism to strangle the young state of the working people. The Great October Socialist Revolution confirmed this brilliant prediction by Lenin.

Changes in historical conditions and the practical experience of class struggle by the proletariat in different countries undoubtedly continue to necessitate the further clarification and modification of individual propositions in the first programme document of the Communist Party, but its basic, most general principles—those principles which continue to serve as the basis of the programmes of revolutionary workers' and communist parties in various countries of the world—remain the same. Class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie remains to this day the fundamental factor in the political life of bourgeois society, a society which, though bourgeois ideologists may strive to convince the working people to the contrary, remains essentially unchanged—a society based on the rule of private property, on the exploitation and oppression of a huge army of working people by a handful of financial and industrial magnates, the kings of business, in whose hands is concentrated enormous wealth created by workers and alienated from them and appropriated by large-scale private-property owners.

In the *Manifesto*, Marx and Engels accused the bourgeoisie of creating a society in which private property exists for only one-tenth of the members of that society, and 'its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths'.¹ They understood

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 500.

perfectly well that the subsequent development of capitalism would not alter this situation to the benefit of the working people, and indeed the continuing concentration of property in the hands of a few is leading to the undivided rule of large-scale monopoly capital in every sphere of public life in modern bourgeois states.

The constitution of the USA declares the people to be the masters of the country. However, in this imperialist country, as in a number of others, economics and politics are in the hands of powerful financial and industrial groups. There are 26 such groups in the USA, 20 in Great Britain, and around 10 each in Japan, the FRG and France.

In the USA 200 thousand families whose wealth exceeds 0.5 million dollars account for only 0.3 per cent of the population, yet own 22 per cent of the national wealth. On the other hand, 60 per cent of the population owns only 7.5 per cent of this wealth. A similar situation can be found in a number of other imperialist countries. From this it is clear that the true nature of bourgeois 'democracy' is determined, as it was in the life time of Marx and Engels, only to an even greater degree, by the rule of private property, since elections to organs of power are, in effect, competitions decided by money. This confirms the conclusion drawn by Marx and Engels in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: 'The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.'

The far-reaching and prolonged crises which regularly shake the capitalist world also confirm the accuracy of the basic tenets in the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 486.

Manifesto, and in particular the assertion that the bourgeoisie is incapable of controlling the gigantic productive forces it has created. 'Modern bourgeois society with its relations of production, of exchange and of property, a society that has conjured up such gigantic means of production and of exchange, is like the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells. For many a decade past the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and of its rule'.¹

These words are still relevant today because they pinpoint the main conflict within capitalist society—the conflict between the social nature of production and the private form of appropriation, between the powerful productive forces and the restrictive private-property relations within which they are confined. The growth of unemployment has become a chronic disease of modern bourgeois society. In the leading capitalist countries unemployment has become particularly widespread. In 1978, the number of unemployed in the USA was 6,047 thousand. In 1980 this figure had increased to 7,449 thousand, and by 1982 it had reached 12 million. In the nine countries of the Common Market (excluding Greece), by September, 1982, the number of officially registered unemployed totalled 11.2 million, i.e., 10.1 per cent of the gainfully employed population. According to

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 489.

the experts, by 1985 this figure will reach 15 million. Of the 357 million inhabitants of Latin America, 160 million live in poverty, and tens of millions are without work.

What a contrast, in comparison with these facts and figures, is the situation in the socialist countries, where there are no crises, no unemployment, no recessions in industrial production. Is not this alone a powerful argument in favour of the replacement of private ownership of the means of production by social ownership, in favour of the overthrow of the power of the exploiters and the establishment of the power of the working people? It is precisely these factors which help the states in which power truly belongs to the people to ensure high and stable rates of development, the just distribution of the national income and an improvement in the living and working conditions of their citizens.

The crisis that gripped the capitalist countries in the 1970s struck not only industrial production, but also agriculture. The rapid growth of agricultural production in post-war years encouraged illusions in many, particularly the proponents of the bourgeois system. However, Marx had foreseen that 'when industry reaches a certain level ... productivity in agriculture must increase relatively more rapidly than in industry'.¹ This fact has in no way disproved the capitalist nature of development. On the contrary, it became particularly manifest when large-scale capital almost everywhere monopolised agricultural production, virtually turning the farmers into hired slaves. The fact that the modern farm is well equipped, that the farmhouse

¹ K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 110.

has every modern facility and the members of the farmer's family all have their own cars does not alter the essence of capitalist exploitation, which has simply adopted a well-disguised form.

It has been calculated, for example, that in the countries of the Common Market the average working week of a farmer is 60 hours, that is, 10.5-11.5 hours over a six-day week, while the working day of the hired agricultural worker is 12-14 hours.

Moreover, the firms from which the farmer purchases farm equipment and fertilizer often impose upon him what amounts to enslavement. Having concluded a contract with a particular firm, the farmer does not have the right to deal with another firm, even if the terms offered by the other firm are more advantageous. He is obliged to sell the agricultural product to 'his' firm by the given date and at the stipulated price.

The practical results of this situation were described by one of the farmers who took part in the national farmers' movement that swept the USA in 1977, L. Richardson, who pointed out that, while the price of agricultural machinery and equipment was rising, the prices for agricultural products were, at best, remaining constant. Thus, a tractor cost in 1977 seven times more than it had twenty years previously, while the price of a bushel of maize had not risen by as much as a cent.

In those countries where the land belongs to those who work it, where the means of production, the instruments of labour, are socialised, and capitalist exploitation has been liquidated, such a situation is simply impossible. Even more impossible is the mass destruction of agricultural products in order to keep the price high while

people starve in many parts of the world. Occasionally the conflicts that break out between the capitalist states are so acute that they are called 'wars'—the 'wine wars' between France and Italy, the 'fish war' between Britain and Scandinavian countries, etc.

In their works, including the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels pointed out more than once that capitalism cannot exist without crises, and that each crisis inevitably arouses millions of working people to struggle, above all the working class. Attempts by the bourgeoisie to transfer the burden of crises onto the shoulders of the working class provoke only an angry and constantly growing protest. The workers refuse to accept inflation, the drop in the real value of their earnings and the cut-backs in expenditure on social services. (In this area the USA, Britain, France, the FRG and other developed countries seem to be in competition with each other.) Despite police repressions and reprisals against the leaders of the working-class and trade-union movement by the bourgeois governments, the strike war in the capitalist countries is intensifying with every year. At such a time, the consciousness of the working class develops rapidly and becomes revolutionary. The most advanced class of the modern age becomes increasingly aware of the truth of the propositions formulated in the *Manifesto*: the existing order cannot be altered without the abolition of private property and its rule, and, in its turn, the abolition of private property and of the society based upon it is impossible without the resolute and uncompromising class struggle of the proletariat.

All this is true, the reader to whom this book

is addressed may say. The basic tenets of the *Manifesto* do indeed describe the present state of affairs in the world capitalist system and the class struggle being waged there. However, what relation does this have to the countries of the East, to the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America? Does not their situation in the modern world, their struggle for national, economic and social liberation, have its own specific characteristics? What is there in the *Manifesto* that relates in any way to the development of these countries and their popular movements?...

Such questions are by no means simple to answer, for they demand a thorough analysis of the state of affairs in the developing countries and also of those tenets of Marxism which, despite the specifics of Asia, Africa and Latin America, are still applicable to them and can help to unravel the complexity and contradictoriness of conditions there. Naturally, modern advocates of imperialism will not agree with this, particularly those who are not pleased by the national-liberation struggle of the peoples of the East. As the anti-imperialist mood of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America increases, so also does the number of works in which it is alleged that the teaching of Marx is not applicable to these countries. Developed in the 19th century with reference to Europe, Marxism is allegedly not in a position to explain the forms of ownership and many other specific features of development in these countries, and therefore cannot serve as the theoretical basis for economic and social changes in these parts of the world.

In such a brief work as the present one it is, of course, impossible to enter into a detailed

critique of this viewpoint advanced by bourgeois ideologists. However, first of all it should be pointed out that the concept of the national-liberation movement as an integral part of the world revolutionary process occupies an important place in the theory of scientific communism. Bourgeois 'critics' of Marxism frankly ignore this aspect of the theory. Furthermore, as the developing countries are drawn into the sphere of world capitalism, the laws and contradictions of this economic formation, first discovered by Marx, become increasingly obvious. In addition, the internal contradictions of the world capitalist economy intensify sharply as that economy moves beyond national boundaries, and this can be seen particularly clearly where there are so-called transnational corporations.

In the *Manifesto* Marx and Engels wrote that the bourgeoisie 'has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West'.¹ By the 1970s the previously backward countries freed themselves of the colonial form of dependence, and now they are conducting a resolute struggle to achieve not only political, but also economic independence. However, imperialism, for which these countries represent a source of raw materials and cheap labour, is not thinking of withdrawing. It is inventing ever more sophisticated methods of economically enslaving the developing countries and thus bringing them under the political influence of imperialism.

Capitalism has revealed its total inability to help Africa to overcome its age-old back-

¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' in: Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 488.

wardness. Having caught many of these countries in the web of a new form of dependence, it has secured through its so-called economic aid the following 'achievements': over the last 15 years, the real per capita income has increased in only 9 countries in Africa, whereas in 14 it has dropped. Of the 29 countries listed by the UN as the most backward, 17 are in Africa. It should also be added that the food crisis in Africa has become more acute during the 1970s. One in four of the African population is either undernourished or actually starving. All in all, more than one-fifth (450 million) of the population of the developing countries consumes less nourishment than the minimum necessary to support basic life activity, that is, in simple terms, is underfed.

In such circumstances it is natural that the struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America against neo-colonialism should intensify. The peoples of these continents are beginning to reject capitalism not only as a system tied up with hated colonialism, but also as a social order unable to solve serious social and economic problems and, more often than not, only aggravating them. As a result, the peoples of the newly-independent countries are being increasingly drawn into the world revolutionary process, and their role within this process is gaining in importance. The escalation of social tension in a number of Afro-Asian states is creating more favourable conditions than existed hitherto for revolutionary change.

To sum up, two powerful currents converge together to form the world revolutionary process—the struggle of the working people in the developing countries to achieve economic independence and social progress, and the struggle of the

working class and non-proletarian working people in the industrially developed capitalist countries against monopolies in the name of the democratisation of society. Thus, as Marx and Engels predicted, the national and international interests of the working people are converging and ending national isolation and national division in the struggle of all the forces opposing world imperialism.

The liberation process in the countries of Asia and Africa is complex and contradictory, marked not only by successes, but also by tragic failures and retreats. This is largely a consequence of the weakness of the working class in these countries, where it is only now taking shape, and the unreliability of the petty bourgeoisie who compose a large proportion of the population. The proletariat in Africa and Asia—and this must not be forgotten—is still connected by thousands of links to the society in which it lives, to the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. It is from the latter that most skilled and qualified workers come, and they naturally bring with them a petty-bourgeois psychology, non-proletarian views, and not infrequently political extremism. The problem of preserving the ideological purity of the working-class movement, its unity and purposefulness, is particularly important in the class struggle being waged in these countries. Those who study the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* should therefore carefully read the critique in Chapter III of various non-proletarian socialist movements.

Marx, Engels and, later, Lenin, pointed out to the working class that it can carry through the tasks put before it by history only if its ideological and political vanguard is a party guided

in its activity by the theory of scientific communism. The number of Marxist-Leninist parties and the size of their membership is constantly increasing as the influence of the ideas of scientific socialism increases and the political position of the working class gains in strength. By the end of the 1970s there were Marxist-Leninist parties in 25 countries in Asia and Africa. Marxist-Leninist ideology is attracting the attention of more and more progressive people in the developing countries, and its growing influence on the minds of these people is explained not only by the fact that bourgeois ideologists are incapable of indicating the way out of the impasse into which the capitalist mode of economic management is leading them. The example of successful socialist construction in the republics of the Soviet East and in Cuba, and the adoption of a socialist orientation by a number of states in Asia and Africa, provide the developing countries with the best possible proof of the viability of Marxism-Leninism and its relevance for the economy not only of advanced capitalist states, but also of economically backward countries.

It is therefore no accident that the main works of the founders of the theory of scientific communism are being printed in increasing numbers around the world. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* has already been issued in numerous editions in English, French, Spanish, German, and Arabic, and in the languages of the peoples of India, Africa, etc. Thanks to the *Manifesto*, the faith of the people in the final victory of their struggle for freedom and justice has been given a firm, scientific basis.

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